



Windows Vista™

Fall 2007

The Official Magazine

Make Great Home Movies!
We show you how on **page 82**

EXPERT REVIEWS:

We pick the best
monitor & graphics
card for you!

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AREA-51[®] m9750

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This One



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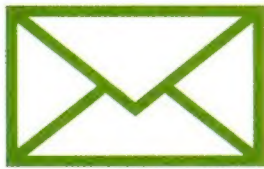
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Master Microsoft Office



Microsoft Office 2007 is nothing short of a revolution for the world's leading business suite. Here are 91 essential tips to help you work smarter and faster.

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It's a Wireless, Wireless World

Windows Vista's roaming features make it easy to work from anywhere. Here's everything you need to know to set your PC free.



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Are online movie downloads really better than DVDs? We've tested the top eight services on the Net, and our results will shock you!

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Patriot offers a wide array of gaming memory ranging from ultra low latencies to extreme frequencies. Tested and qualified with all of the latest chipsets, our Extreme Performance memory is guaranteed to provide a boost for the next generation Intel and AMD platforms. When looking for performance upgrades, supercharge your PC rig with Patriot's Extreme Performance memory modules.

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EDITOR'S CHOICE - Winner of Tom's Hardware Roundup

"Patriot Extreme Performance PC2-6400 holds a commanding position based on its overclockability alone, and an ultra-low final price is astounding."



Xbit Labs

"...the Patriot modules proved to be the fastest among all the memory kits included in this review."



EDITOR'S CHOICE - PC Stats Editors Choice

"Patriot Memory has been trailblazing some new paths for flexible DDR2."

Where To Buy:

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Club

PC CLUB

BOVON

Fry's

MICRO CENTER
The Ultimate Computer Store

TigerDirect.com

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GET STARTED

Get your old files onto your new PC

It's easy to transfer your documents, photos, and settings to your new Windows Vista PC, but getting your programs working can be a little tricky. Here's how to do it.

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Easy Media Sharing

The new features of Windows Vista make it easy not only to set up a home network for sharing music and videos between all your PCs, but also to troubleshoot any network problems quickly.

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Install and configure Windows Live OneCare

In our last issue, we introduced you to Windows Live OneCare, a new program that combines antivirus, backup, and computer maintenance – and does it all automatically. Here's how it works and how you can use it.

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Control your PC with Voice Commands

If you haven't tried it yet, discover how you can control your computer just by talking to it. All of the advice in this guide is taken from the book *Windows Vista Plain & Simple*.

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Back up and restore your e-mail

Whenever you buy a new PC, you'll want to transfer your e-mails from the old machine to its successor. Thankfully, it's a surprisingly easy task. Read on to learn more.

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Back up and restore your e-mail

Your everyday life is filled with all kinds of activities and Windows Calendar can help you keep organised. We show you how in this extract from the book *Breakthrough Windows Vista* from Microsoft Press.

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DO MORE

Create a photo album on DVD

Want to show off and share your pictures on the big screen by creating a disc that you can watch on the TV. Windows DVD Maker makes it simple to do.

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Make your laptop battery last a day

Laptop battery life is measured in hours, although it often seems like minutes. Can the Windows Vista power management options prolong the power for an entire working day?

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Turn your memories into great home movies

A camcorder can help you take your friends and family on a quick tour of this world, or bore them into the next one. Find out how to make the movies they'll actually want to see.

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GEAR GUIDE

Choose the graphics card upgrade for you

Whether you want to play games, get into 3D animation, or simply get the best out of the interface in Windows Vista, a decent graphics card will give your PC a new lease of life. Here's how to choose the right card for your needs.

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Widescreen monitors for Windows Vista

The finest view of Windows Vista is through a widescreen window. Here's a look at some of today's best displays.

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INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

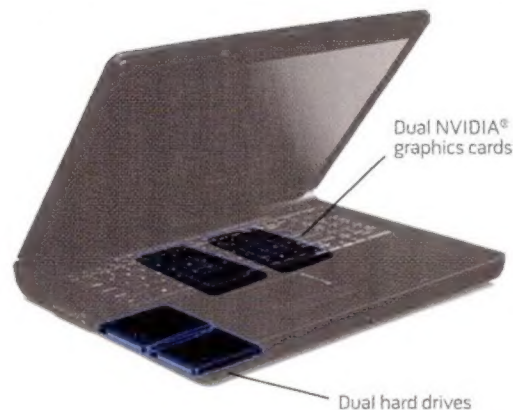
When some people judge a PC's value, it's all about the specs. But a key factor that often gets buried beneath the quest for the latest graphics card or fastest processor is a system's industrial design. More than just a stylish look, an excellent industrial design greatly enhances a PC's durability and functionality, and can be the difference between having a system you can't wait to chuck and a system you can't afford to be without.

BEYOND JUST POWERFUL

Take Alienware's 17" Area-51[®] m9750 notebook, for example. A quick glance at some of the Area-51[®] m9750's basic features is sure to raise a few eyebrows:

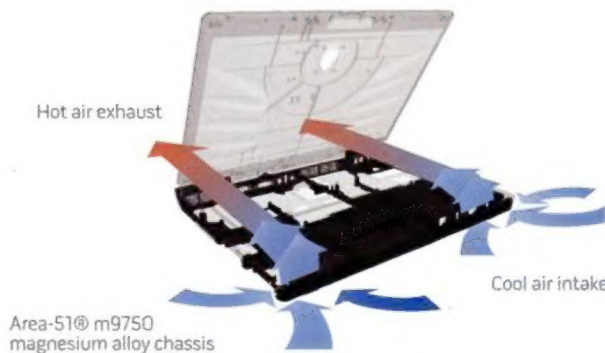
- Dual-core Intel[®] processor • Dual NVIDIA[®] graphics cards • Dual hard drives
- Integrated TV tuner • Integrated webcam • Optical audio output

Even with that degree of technological force packed inside, the Area-51[®] m9750 has been expertly designed to stay as light and as thin as possible. In fact, with a height of only 1.5", the Area-51[®] m9750 is the thinnest 17" SLI notebook available. What's more, the chassis is made up of magnesium alloy, which is 75% lighter than steel, while still providing superior rigidity to plastic to ensure every component inside stays protected.



KEEPING ITS COOL

The light magnesium alloy chassis also helps the Area-51[®] m9750 to manage thermals efficiently, along with an enhanced airflow design that outputs air through the back of the notebook to optimize heat dispersion. Most traditional notebooks, in contrast, output air through the side. And by keeping the Area-51[®] m9750's high-performance hardware, specifically its dual-graphics configuration, in mind during development, the notebook's advanced cooling architecture was built to handle the fastest mobile graphics cards available. That's no small feat.



MINIMIZING WEAR AND TEAR

Style has always been one of Alienware's most important considerations when designing systems, and the Area-51[®] m9750 is no exception. But what's the point of a cool design if it's covered in scratches and fingerprints? That's why the Area-51[®] m9750's Stealth Black surface makes certain that the day-to-day scrapes and scratches that often plague well-used notebooks never make an appearance. In addition, the Area-51[®] m9750 is fingerprint-resistant; even if you do manage to get fingerprints on the material, they easily wipe off in seconds. The cast of CSI would not be pleased.

As the Area-51[®] m9750 proves, eye-popping specs are great, but they don't always tell the entire story. A quality industrial design goes a long way toward making your system outperform and outclass the systems of those poor unfortunate souls known as your friends.



Stealth Black Surface



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MAIL Letters

Talk Back



Here's what our readers are saying

Classic View

Your instructions to help make older programs run correctly in Windows Vista on page 17 of the June/July issue say to go to Control Panel > Programs > Use an older program. I am using Vista Home Premium edition and there is no icon in Control Panel called "Programs". There is one called "Programs and Features," but I can't find anything in the screen that comes up that offers an option of "Use an older program" or anything that might even be close.

Dan Canfield

Thank you for bringing this to our attention, Dan. We (incorrectly) assumed that readers would be using Control Panel in Control Panel Home mode, rather than Classic View. For that tip to work, click Control Panel Home in the pane on the left side of the Control Panel window. Then follow the instructions as printed. -Ed.

Down to business

In your April/May 2007 edition, the topics and content were excellent. I would love to see a section dedicated to the business version of Vista and how it will help my users with their daily responsibilities. Also, having home and business in one magazine would allow me the ability to subscribe for my IT staff and hopefully the mixed content would make it more appealing for them to actually want to read it. Great job and I look forward to future editions.

Joe Milici

...and I'm a PC

Finally, after all the hateful Apple commercials about Vista, I can find something to look forward too: Real information for Vista enthusiasts. I bought my first magazine last week and can't put it down. Keep up the good info!

James Williams

So, no more bag reviews?

I bought the first two issues of this magazine hoping I would get lots of useful information about getting Vista to work on my computer. I have to admit I haven't managed to get it to work yet, it's just so unstable. But that's the sort of information I need, and I'm sure most of us need. How to get this thing to work. So what do I see in the second issue? A half page review of a camera bag, A half page on a poor quality video camera, a page on a digital SLR camera and two pages on a soon-to-be-dropped mp3 player as well as a page on some speakers and another on two other portable media players. When you do write about Vista itself, the articles are pretty good and have good information, the sort that most of us need. Isn't there enough vital information about Vista with which you could fill your magazine?

Richard Boyle

Talk to Us

Windows Vista Magazine is your magazine, and we're just dying to hear what you think of it. Send questions, comments, and thoughts to windowsvistamagazine@futureus.com, and we may print them here. Got a technical question? Send it in, and we'll answer it in our Q&A section.

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Your digital all-access pass to Hollywood



There's nothing like a good movie to take your mind off your troubles, or open your mind to new ideas. And there's nothing like Windows Vista for opening up your home to everything Hollywood has to offer. Whether you're looking for movies to-go on a pocket-size media player or you want the big-picture experience on your living room HD set, Windows Vista's entertainment features really do have you covered.

For my part, I can't stand waiting around for my next movie shipment to come in the mail. Although my Netflix movie queue is hundreds of titles long, the little stack of recently-received DVDs that are sitting by my Xbox just never seem as appealing as whatever title my wife and I just spotted on the Internet five minutes ago. Fortunately, the Web is now brimming with cool new movie download sites that give us the instant gratification we're looking for. And rather than wait two

days for the hot new title to arrive in the mail (or—the horror!—driving to a store to pick it up), we can click it, start a download, and start watching it within minutes.

Online stores offer way more titles than on-demand cable services, and you get far more flexible viewing options. Many give you the option of getting specially formatted small-screen editions that you can watch on your portable media player, which is great for anyone with a long commute on public transit, or for passing time on unbearably long international flights. Of course, you can always watch them right on your computer's display, or you can hook up your laptop to your entertainment center to play them on your HDTV. And one service in our roundup even offers complete DVD downloads, with all the extra features you'd find on a store-bought disc—only you download them and burn them to your own disc instead. (Cool as it sounds, though, I'd probably rather have the professionally packaged disc set, which usually includes interesting notes and other tidbits.)

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide whether online movie downloads are really ready to displace DVDs. We give you the facts, but the verdict is yours to render. Have a read, and let us know what you think!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert".

Robert Strohmeyer, Editor in Chief

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SPACE AGE Holographic video technology is now becoming a reality

THE PICTURE DESK

TECH ON THE SCREEN

Star Wars

How long will it be before we're sitting on Mars chatting with a holographic friend back on Earth?

Some 30 years ago, George Lucas delivered *Star Wars* to the world, and it was a groundbreaking piece of cinema. Its opening sequence – a rebel ship being pursued by an Imperial Star Destroyer – was voted the best special effect scene in movie history. In addition to eye-popping effects, it had

Star Wars previewed some pretty revolutionary technological advances, such as the Holocam, used by Luke Skywalker and Obi Wan Kenobi, for recording and playing back holographic imagery. Then there was the Comlink, used by Jedi Master Qui-Gon Jinn, which was a tiny hand-held or wrist-mounted

"It demonstrates how a robot could follow you around and record and playback your life's events"

an epic storyline, and is now considered one of the best films of all time, but there was more to this sci-fi romp than a lot of heavy breathing and wireless choking methods.

communications transceiver that could receive and transmit data.

Well, we've already got mobile phones as small as credit cards; we can talk over the Internet; I02 Technology

has created the Heliodisplay, which projects holographic video... Microsoft has also offered its glimpse of future media delivery via the recently released recruitment video, which demonstrates how, in the future, a personal robot could follow you around and record, transmit and play back your life's events.

In *Star Wars*, such recordings had to be transmitted from one end of the galaxy to the other, but they would have been useless without a solid method of quickly transporting the data. In 2006, MIT Researchers developed a light detector that may help in creating broadband that allows us to communicate over interplanetary distances. Maybe this means we'll one day be able to stream holographic video across space?



BUY IT
Star Wars
Episode IV: A
New Hope is out
now on DVD,
\$13.99 from
Amazon.com

ME AND MY COMPUTER

Johnathan Wendel (Fatal1ty)

One of the most famous gamers ever tells us how dreams can come true

Johnathan Wendel, aka Fatal1ty, is a celebrity, but he isn't a well-known one. He does, however, have a profession that many of us would die for. He's a professional gamer.

Johnathan first fell in love with PC games in the '90s, when he gunned his way through *Wolfenstein 3D* – his first taste of a FPS (first person shooter) and now his favorite style of gameplay.

He started playing as a pro at the age of 18 – an age when most kids are flipping burgers – and in 2007, aged 25, he has chalked up 12 gaming world titles, has his own line of products, and made a ton of money. So what's the secret

other people, Johnathan spends his time on his PC keeping in touch with friends, family, and other gamers via Windows Live Messenger, as well as surfing the net to check up on his Fatal1ty business. "You can do everything these days with a PC," he notes. "I'm all over the place, so I use Skype, but if I travel, I take a portable media player, as it does what I want and the battery lasts ages."

Johnathan's home PC is actually pretty modest, but in the next few months he's building another that he can tweak, to get maximum gaming performance, and of course he'll be running Windows Vista!

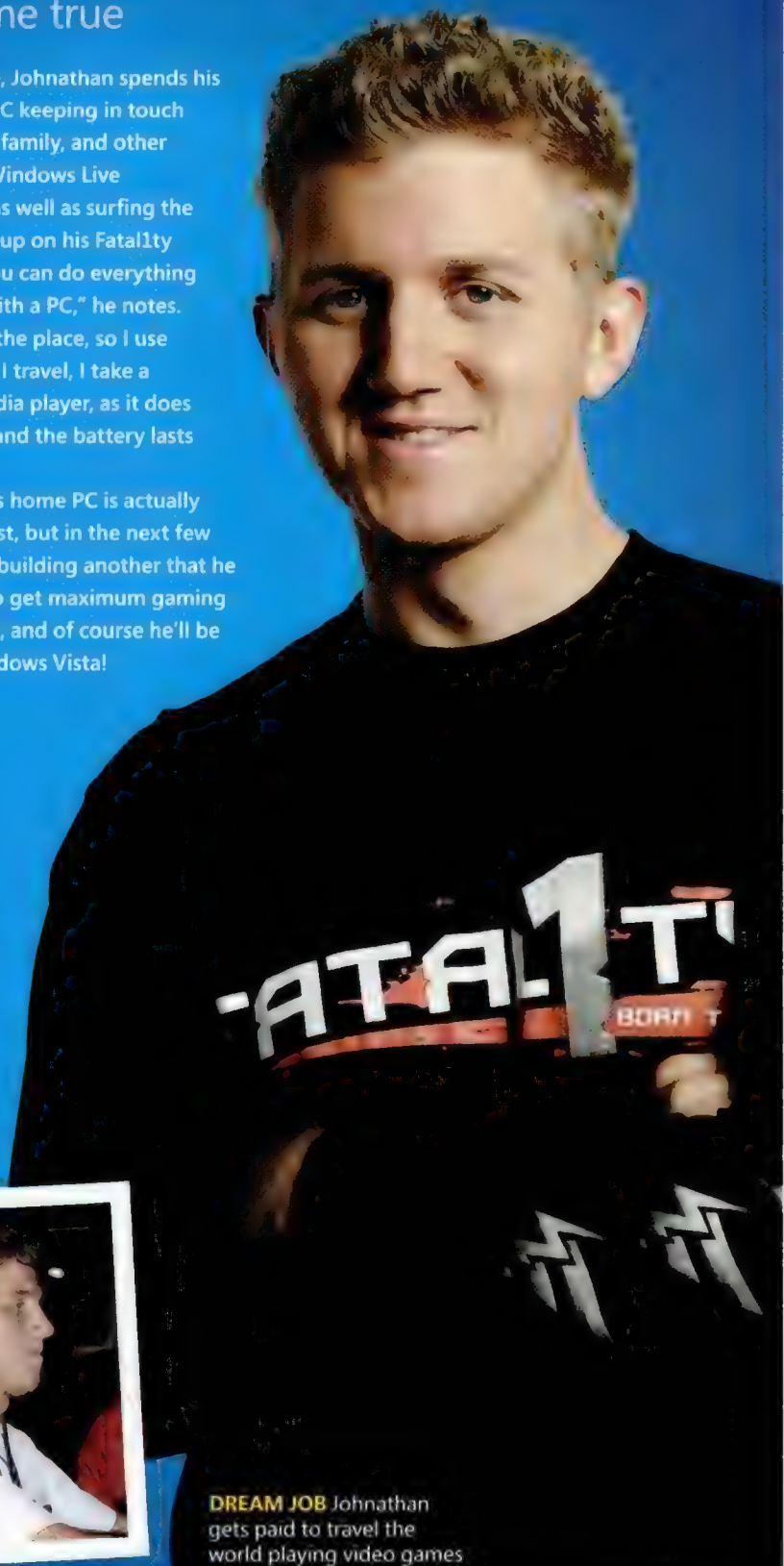
"The FPS and sports games offer the biggest cash prizes"

to being good at games and getting paid for it?

"I train two to six hours a day," says Johnathan, "and when an event is approaching, I'll up this to eight." He has a pretty strict training program: He plays for four hours, runs three miles, and plays for another four hours, so he's fit in mind and body.

Training isn't the only vital part of gaming, though. Getting into the right area is critical, so it's no good learning how to rear fluffy animals. "The most popular games are the FPS and sports titles," says Johnathan. "These offer the biggest cash prizes."

When he's not virtually killing



DREAM JOB Johnathan gets paid to travel the world playing video games

Coming soon... the flash laptop

The laptop of the future will weigh as much as an Altoids tin and outlast a Duracell bunny

Performance-wise, the laptop is catching up with its bigger desktop counterparts. Processors are now much more powerful, screen sizes have ballooned, and some can be had for under \$500.

But, despite advances in battery technology, you still can't go more than a couple of hours without frantically seeking out a wall socket, mid-way through a critical gaming – er, we mean "work" – session at the airport.

Short of strapping on some sort of crude thermonuclear reactor and turning your PC into Frankenstein's notebook, there really isn't a lot you can do. Until now, that is.

The solid state drive (SSD) has arrived on the market, and is promising to revolutionize computer technology. It's similar to a conventional hard drive, but instead uses flash memory – the kind you'd normally find in an SD card – so there are no moving parts.

This means that, aside from running silently and producing very little heat, it's about the size of a chocolate bar and weighs virtually nothing. It can withstand a fair amount of shock, vibration, and variations in temperature and, critically, it uses very little power.

Following a hard act

The benefits of using an SSD in a laptop are pretty clear. You can carry it around without suffering a hernia; its battery will last much longer, and you'll be able to drive over it without it self-destructing (we think).

So does this mean that the hard drive will die the same way the diskette did? Probably, but not for another few years, at least. Especially if you consider the price.

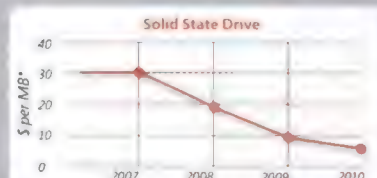
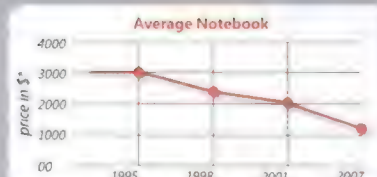
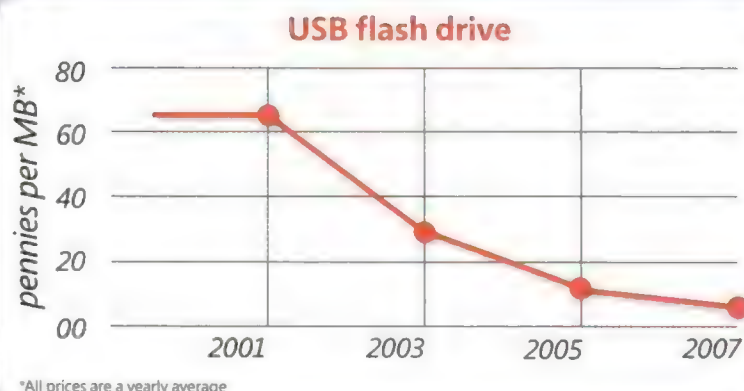
Although flash memory is pretty cheap compared with what it was six years ago, it's still a lot more expensive per megabyte than a regular hard drive.



LIGHTEN YOUR LOAD
SSD drives will make laptops lighter and tougher

For example, 32GB of SSD is about £500 right now; roughly 15 times the price of more conventional data storage. However, it looks like it will only be a couple of years before the price of flash memory is on a par with the price of good ol' spinning hard drives, and then we'll likely see an industry-wide change.

How technology prices have fallen over recent years



Looking at the graphs above, we predict that the price of SSD technology could follow a similar pattern over the next four years.

YOUR THREE-MINUTE GUIDE TO...

Online auctions

When scientists invent teleportation, we'll be able to travel around the world in seconds. But for now online auctions offer the next best thing. With a click of the mouse you can send all of your money or all of your possessions to Nigeria.

When you advertise your dog-eared 2005 Backstreet Boys calendar in an online auction you'll immediately receive 700 e-mails offering \$2.5m for it. You have two choices: You can stop the auction early and get ripped off now, or you can wait until the auction ends and get ripped off then. It really doesn't matter: Whether you post it today or a week from today, the calendar's going to Nigeria – and the payment's from a cloned credit card, so it'll be yanked by your bank within three seconds of shipping your package. That means not only will you lose your money, but you'll no longer have a picture of A.J. to cheer yourself up.

If you're a buyer, things are even more fun. When you win an auction and make your payment, one of three things will happen. One, the package will arrive and you'll discover that you've bought a photo of the thing instead of the thing itself; two, the package will arrive and



you'll discover that you've bought a box for the thing instead of the thing itself; or three, no package will arrive

and you'll receive a postcard from your money instead. "Wish you were here," it says. "In Nigeria!"

TLA (THREE-LETTER ACRONYM)

OCD: Obsessive Computer Disorder

"When, no matter how hard you try, resistance to the lure of your PC's charms becomes almost impossible. There are many symptoms of OCD, including a feeling of euphoria while sitting at your computer, and, of course, marrying it. Should the worst happen, counseling is strongly recommended."

START NEWS AND TRENDS

Happy Anniversary Tomb Raider

A decade of Lara Croft and the lovely ladies who've played her.

Rhona Mitra

Lara for 1997-1998

Stats English, born 1976

Facts Was number 46 in *Maxim's* 100 Hot Women list for 2001. *The Sun* claimed her dad did her breast implants

What's she doing now?

Currently filming futuristic thriller *Doomsday* alongside Bob Hoskins



Nell McAndrew

Lara for 1998-1999

Stats English, born 1973

Facts The former *Daily Star* Page 3 girl posed nude for *Playboy* for which she was fired as Lara

What's she doing now?

TV, most recently *The Heaven and Earth Show* in 2006



Lucy Clarkson

Lara for 2000-2002

Stats English, born 1983.

Facts Modelled lingerie for Vivienne Westwood. Seen with 'Jodie Jordan Kiss My' written on her bum at the Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life premiere

What's she doing now? Being Googled next to the word 'nude'



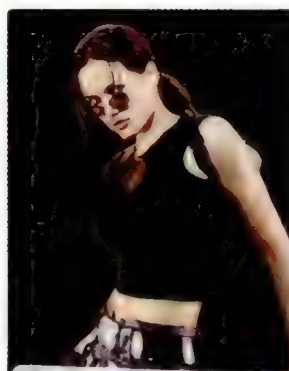
Lara Weller

Lara for 1999-2000

Stats Dutch, born 1974

Facts Appeared in *Maxim* several times. Greatest loves include fish, pasta, and God. Says God gets her biggest vote

What's she doing now?
God knows



Jill De Jong

Lara for 2002-2004

Stats Dutch, born 1982

Facts Jill says she "shares Lara's thirst for adventure and travel", but is quiet on the animal killing

What's she doing now?

Working on plans to study business and then start her own company

Karima Adebibe

Lara for 2006-to date

Stats Half-Irish, half-Moroccan, born 1985

Facts Previously appeared as the 'sacrificial maiden' in *Aliens v Predator*

What's she doing now?
Being Lara



Induction charging kits

We're all familiar with wireless networking, but what about wireless power? Induction charging could soon spell the end of cables and sockets

One day we'll have gadgets that don't use batteries at all, but for now we're stuck with them – and worse, we're stuck with a cavalcade of chargers. We've got a charger for our Sony phone and one for our spouse's Moto, one for the DSLR camera and a different one for the pocket cam, one for the big MP3 player, a different one for the pocket player, and yet another one for the Pocket PC – and that's before we look at our laptops and other computer gear. When we go on vacation, the various chargers take up so much space there's no room left for clothes. Wouldn't it be great if we didn't need any of them at all? (The chargers, we mean.)

Cable-free power already exists, and you'll find it in electric toothbrushes and

some shavers. Water and electrical connectors don't mix, so they use induction charging instead. That means they're essentially using wireless electricity – and the same technology is coming to your favorite gadgets.

The science

With traditional chargers, the part you plug in contains a transformer, which creates the electricity that travels along the cable to your gadget's battery. With induction charging, though, the transformer is split in two: Half of it's in the gadget, and half of it's in the charger. Put them together and you've got a transformer – even though the two parts aren't actually touching.

Of course, you can't charge any old gadget by induction. Your gadget needs to include a coil and you need a charg-

ing station that contains the other half. For induction charging to really take off, then, we need a standard kind of coil and a standard kind of charger – like the one WildCharge (www.wildcharge.com) has come up with.

New product

WildCharge was a big hit at this year's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas; its WildCharger system comprises an ultra-thin charging mat and an adaptor that fits inside a laptop, cell phone, or other device. As long as the charging mat is plugged in, you can stick any compatible device on it and get instant power. The system pumps out 90 watts, which is enough to run – not just charge – a laptop, and it can charge up to five gadgets simultaneously. Will it be expensive? Almost certainly – but in a few years' time it could be cheap enough to make us chuck all our old chargers in the trash.

Light of the charge brigade

Because induction charging mats are exceptionally thin, you could put them in almost anything – so anything from your desk to your dashboard to the dinner tray on a plane could power and charge your laptop, your phone, or your MP3 player.

In the long term, it might be possible to make giant, ultra-powerful chargers for your garage floor, which would recharge your electric car. In the really long term, roads could provide the power, removing the need for batteries all together, and making cars lighter, faster, and more economical.

CUT THE CABLES

The WildCharge system gets rid of cumbersome battery chargers. Simply place your WildCharge-enabled device on the charging mat and it will provide all the power your gadget needs



Beware of spyware

Protecting your PC is like protecting an office. Spot the villains at work in this one...

Most people are aware of the need to run antivirus protection, but much less clear about the dangers of spyware. However, spyware can be even more damaging than viruses because it's designed to collect information about you, steal your personal data, and even skim off your money. Let's look at your computer as if it were a business under attack from industrial spies, and see what the dangers are.

Data kidnapper

■ This burglar arrived with a delivery for your company but, having made it inside, he's raiding filing cabinets and stealing folders full of useful information. He'll stop the company from being able to access its own files, and he'll only return them once he gets a pay-off. Software that keeps you from your own data (usually by encrypting it) until you pay a fat fee is called **Ransomware**, and it often arrives attached to an email.

Rogue traders

■ These workmen were hired to install internal locks, but while they're here they are quietly installing a few spy cameras so they can collect information on the business. Before they leave the building, they'll also steal some letterhead notepaper, which they'll use to write their own references to get lots more spying opportunities. Software that sneaks around while disguised by another program is called **Spyware**.

How Windows Vista protects you...

■ **TROJANS** These 'wooden horses' face a three-pronged defense nowadays. Windows Firewall detects any unauthorized outgoing data; Windows Defender detects suspicious software at work; and Windows Service Hardening limits the damage it can do. This infiltrator would be detected as soon as he opened a lock without permission.

■ **SPYWARE** Outbound filtering on the firewall prevents unknown data from going out. Windows Defender picks up the presence of spyware, too. It's like arresting the culprit and throwing a towel over the camera while you're at it.

■ **HIJACKER** Internet Explorer 7 includes improved security zones and add-on management, and the phishing filter verifies each and every site you visit. You are warned if you are running at a security level where either the Internet Explorer 7 home page

also provides another layer of defense against web-based attacks.

■ **RANSOMWARE** Windows Defender identifies many types of malicious software, and warns you if an unidentified program is attempting to make a change to your data.

■ **ROOT KIT** Any attempt to access the outside world is picked up by Windows Firewall's new outbound filtering. Windows Defender picks up known root kits - so his fake ID card won't fool it.

■ **DIALER** Advanced network awareness enables you to block unknown dial-up connections. The Malicious Software Removal Tool, which is delivered through Automatic Updates, periodically scans your computer for known malicious software, including dialers and prevalent viruses. Windows Defender recognizes known dialers, too. The fake cleaner will be arrested before he can bill you.



Bogus controller

■ A buddy of a slightly disgruntled employee has gained access to the security room with a forged pass and is changing all the codes to the alarm system. He's also taken control of all the security cameras, so he or his friends can do just about anything they want, anywhere in the building, without anyone noticing. Software that conceals what's really going on (sometimes to use your computer as a platform to commit other offenses) is called a **Root kit**.

Corrupt contractor

■ You've invited this character into the building to clean your offices, but when no one is looking, he's using the telephones to call premium rate numbers – ones that he owns and takes the profits from. In effect, money is streaming out of your phone lines, and the first you'll learn about it is when the next phone bill arrives. Software that uses your computer to ring up its owner's high-rate hotline is called a **Dialer**.

Infiltrator

■ A bogus employee mingles with staff from the morning shift as they come into the building, in order to slip past the security guard. His real job is to open as many of your office locks as possible, rendering your security useless. Once he has done this, other members of his gang will be able to steal your secrets or even gain control of the building. In computer terms, the morning shift is a legitimate application, and the lock-picker slipping in with it is called a **Trojan**.

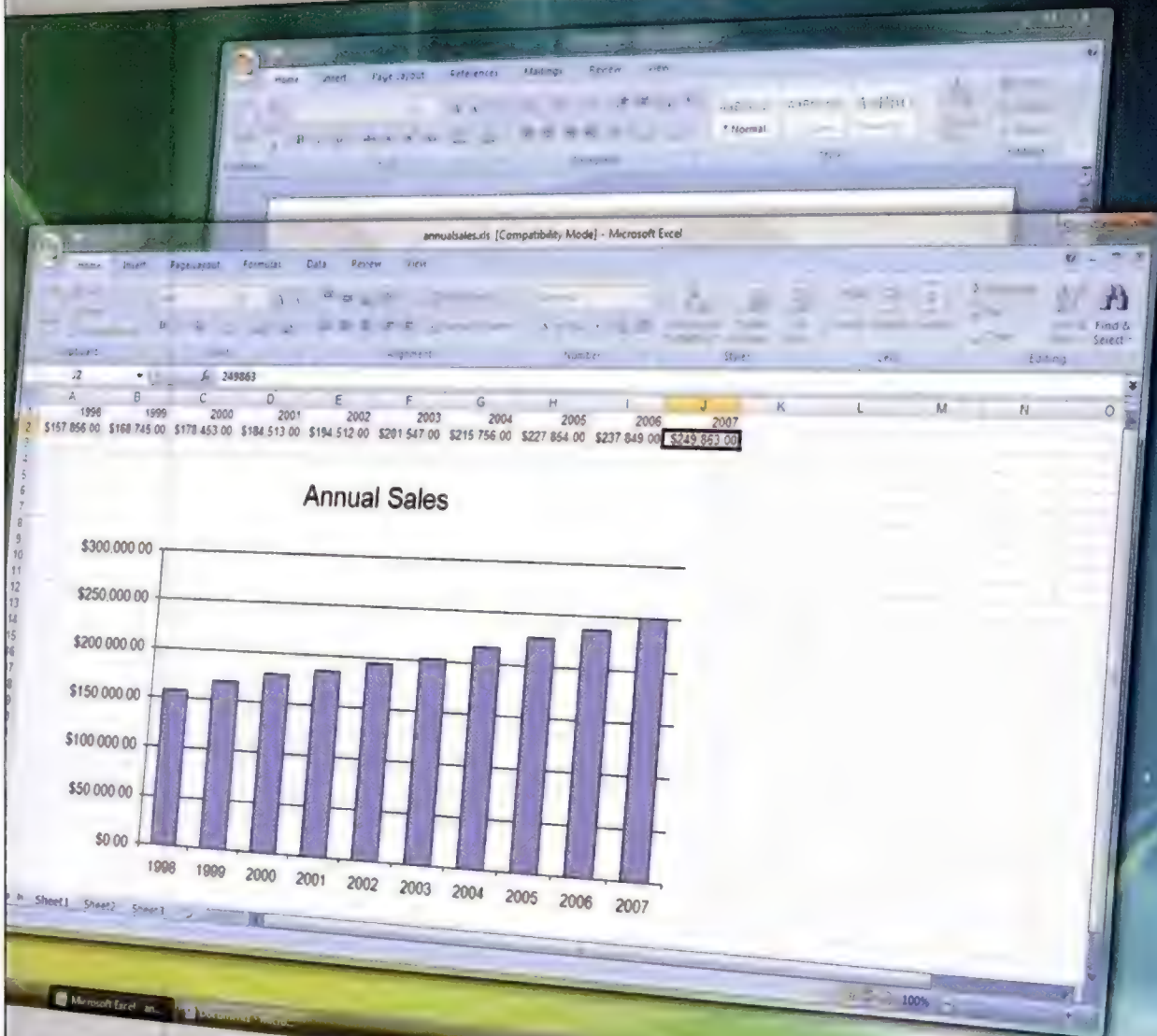
Service bandits

■ This crew looks like harmless service workers, but what they're actually doing is changing your building's electricity and telecoms from the supplier you have a contract with to their own networks. And they'll make it very hard to change back to the services that you want. People who re-route your computer's contacts to their services or sites are called **Hijackers**, and the process is sometimes referred to as a 'drive-by download'.

master microsoft office®

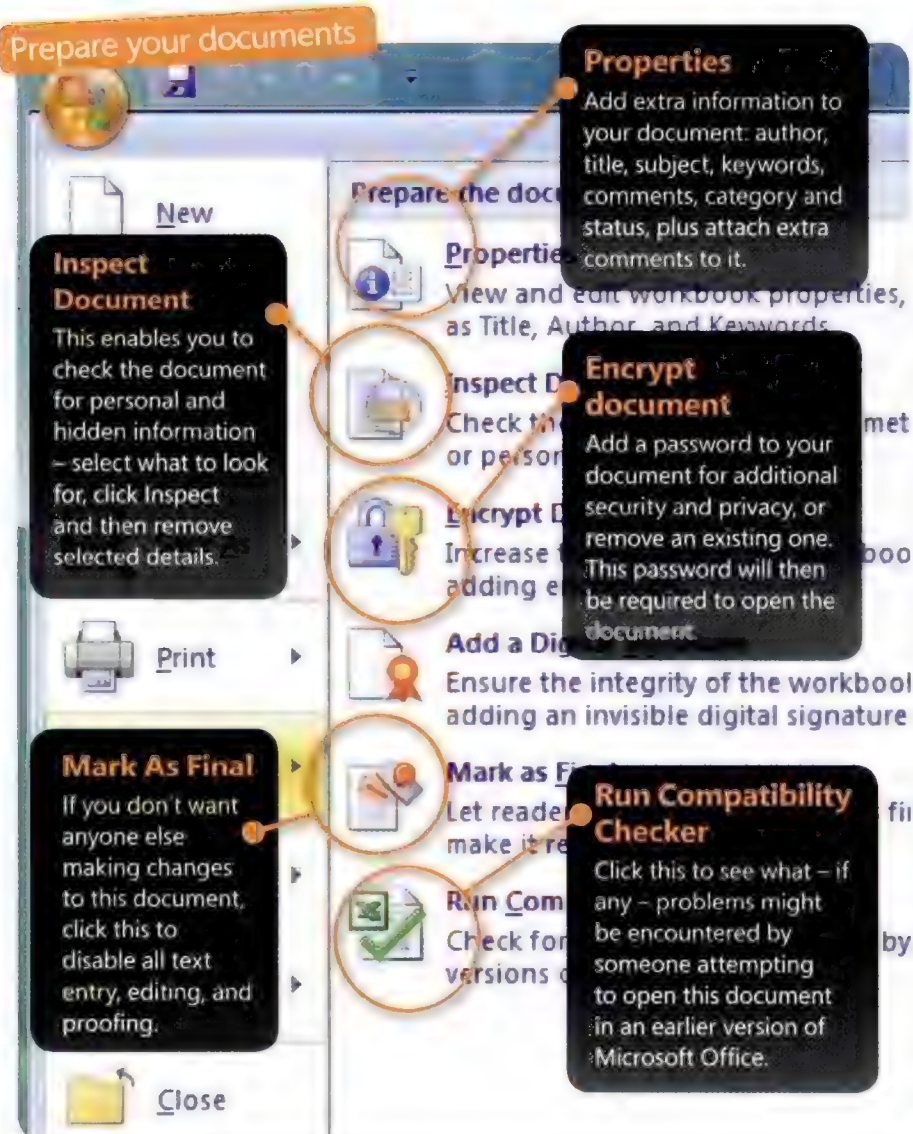
91 essential tips to help you work smarter and faster

Microsoft Office 2007 is nothing short of a revolution for the world's leading business suite. Every single app received a total revamp, including new menus, new features, and a whole new level of interoperability. Here's how to make the most of all these advances.



All Around Office

Helpful hints for the entire suite



Sharing documents

If you're going to share documents with others, consider which version of Office they may be using before doing so. If they'll need to edit the document, consider saving it in a format that will open in earlier versions of Microsoft Office (choose "Save as" from the orange **Office** button at the top of the window).

If they just need to read or print out the document, click the **Office** button and choose **Save as > Find add-ins for other file formats**.

Download the Save as PDF or XPS plug-in and install it; you can now convert documents to either format and attach them to an e-mail via the **Office** button > **Send** menu.

Choosing XPS or PDF ensures it will look exactly the same on any PC.

Publish your document

The 2007 Office system's Publish feature makes it easier than ever to share your documents in a variety of different ways.

You can burn your PowerPoint 2007 presentation to CD or post your Word 2007 document as a blog entry, for example.

To convert your Word 2007 document into a blog entry, click the **Office** button and choose **Publish > Blog**. Follow the instructions to set up access to your existing blog account or sign up for a new account.

Your document will then appear in a new window with a Blog Post tab containing tools you can use to tweak your entry before uploading it.

The Quick Access Toolbar

You'll notice that there's a small toolbar sitting to the right of the Office button. Handily, this gives you quick and easy access to the Save, Undo, and Redo buttons – but that's not all. It can be customized further to give you access to just about any other command available in your

Office apps.

To customize the Quick Access Toolbar, simply right-click the **Office** button and choose **Customize Quick Access Toolbar**. To quickly add less visible options to the toolbar, select "Commands not in the ribbon" from the menu.

Your questions answered

Got a problem getting started? We've got the solutions...

Q Can I open the 2007 Office system files in other versions of Microsoft Office?

A The Microsoft Office Compatibility Pack for Office Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2007 file formats enables other users to view, edit (with some limitations), and save Office Open XML documents in Microsoft Office 2000, XP, or 2003. Find out more at the help pages <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/923505> and <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/924074>, respectively.

Q How can I check for problems in the 2007 Office system?

A The Microsoft Office system comes with its own built-in diagnostics tool, which you'll find by clicking **Start → All Programs → Microsoft Office → Microsoft Office Tools → Microsoft Office Diagnostics**. Follow the instructions to give the 2007 Office system a quick once-over.

Q I've forgotten my e-mail server settings. What can I do?

A Long-winded mail set-up is no longer an issue if you're using Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 – just enter your e-mail address and password and it will go off and try to find your mail server settings for you.

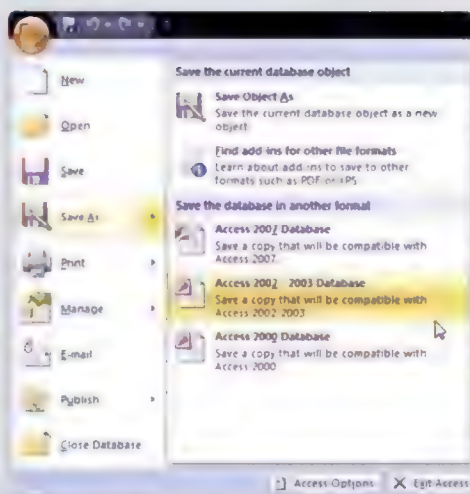


Q How do I import settings from my previous version of Microsoft Office?

A The simplest way to preserve your old settings is to install the 2007 Office System over your old Microsoft Office installation.

Q Is there a way to save my documents in older Microsoft Office formats?

A Yes, there is. Click the **Office** button and choose **Save as**, then pick the earlier version of your 2007 Office system application (for example, Word 97-2003 Document). Note that you may lose some information from your document by choosing this, so click **Prepare → Run Compatibility Checker** to see what – if anything – will be lost in translation.



OLD SCHOOL You have the option of saving your document in an earlier format

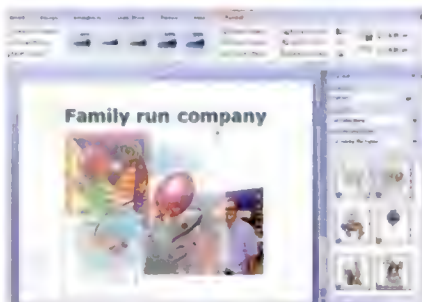
Q Can I back up my 2007 Office system settings?

A The back-up tools within Windows Vista include the Microsoft Office system settings, so you can use that to back them up. If you want to transfer them to another PC, use Windows Easy Transfer instead. You'll find both programs under **Start → All Programs → Accessories → System Tools**.



Q Where can I get free clip art?

A Whether you're looking for some cool icons to bring boring documents to life, designing invitations, or putting together promotional material for your business, there are over 150,000 free images online for you to use in your 2007 Office system applications. The simplest way to access all this clip art is through the programs themselves. Switch to the **Insert** tab and click **Clip Art** to reveal the Clip Art task pane, which will let you search Microsoft's collection for the images you want.



PICTURE THIS Bring your document to life with one of the 150,000 images free to Microsoft Office users

Microsoft Office Word 2007

The new Word does more than ever before.
Here's how to make it work for you

BEST NEW FEATURES

Enhanced Word 2007 interface with Microsoft Office Fluent

Preformatted elements, including page designs and typeface styles

Drop-down Gallery elements provide instant visual feedback

New charting, diagramming and enhanced image effects

Integrated blogging and direct blog uploads

Instant document-wide style changes

Enhanced spelling and grammar checker

Enhanced document revision system with new view

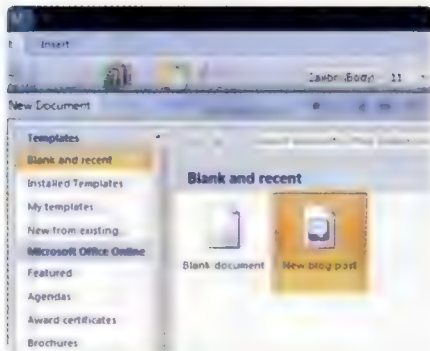
Support for PDF and XPS document exporting

Reduced final file size and enhanced security

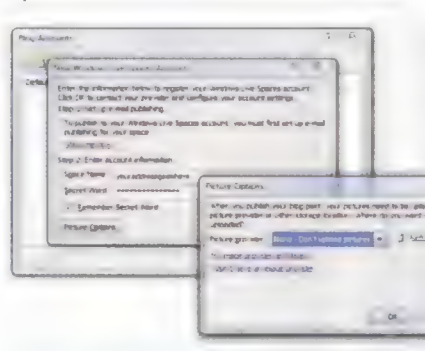


Spread the word

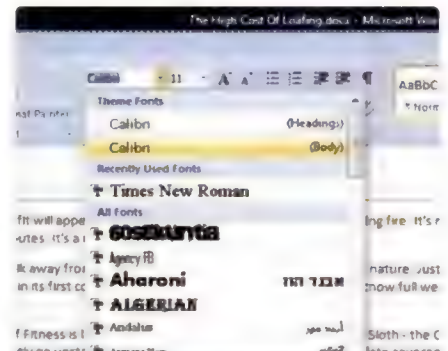
Get yourself heard on the Internet in six easy steps



1 READY, SET, BLOG To create a blog post, simply click **New** and pick "New blog post" from the list of available document types. If you've already set everything up, you'll go straight to the editor – if not, you'll need to enter some settings.



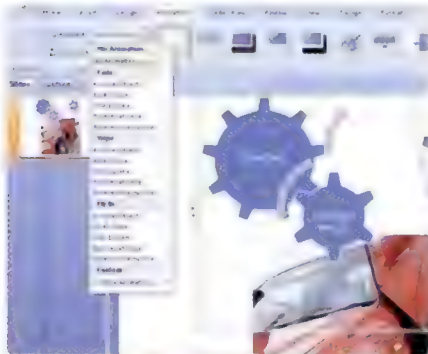
2 UP AND ATOM Several prominent blogging tools are already coded in. If the one you're using isn't on the list, you'll need to find out if it supports either Atom or MetaWeblog. This information will be in your blog program's documentation.



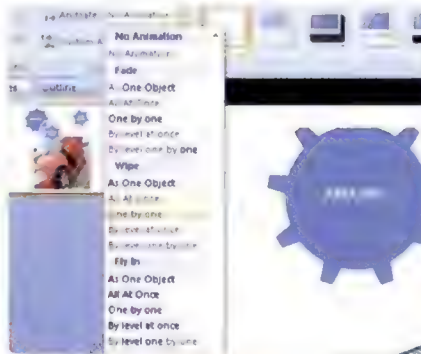
3 NOT MY TYPE In the editing window, the Fluent interface becomes shorter. The default font is Calibri but most sites use Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman, Georgia, or Trebuchet MT. Leave it as it is; the blog will sort out the font after posting.

Bring presentations to life with SmartArt

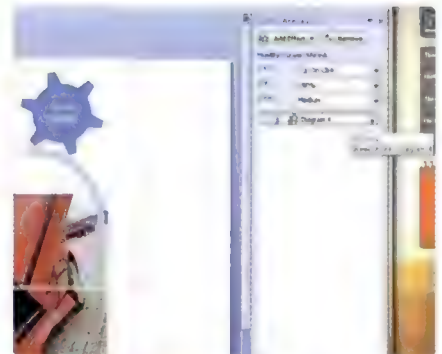
You can take SmartArt even further in Microsoft Office PowerPoint 2007



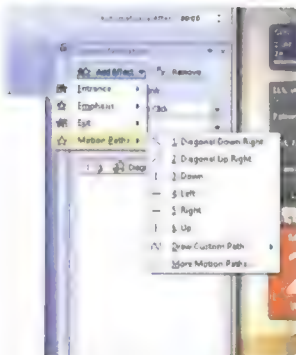
1 ANIMATED BEHAVIOR Creating SmartArt charts and tables in Word 2007 is easy, but in PowerPoint 2007 you can add life to images too. Click on the SmartArt graphic, then on the Animations tab, and select the animation you want from the Animate list.



2 ONE STEP FORWARD The options available to you depend on the layout you use. Here we've chosen "One by one" so each shape is animated individually, one after the other, but other options let you animate everything at once.



3 ONE STEP BACK To reverse the order of an animation, click on the one you want to reverse. In the Animations group, which is under the Animation tab, click **Custom Animation**. You can reverse animations, but you can't play them in a random order.



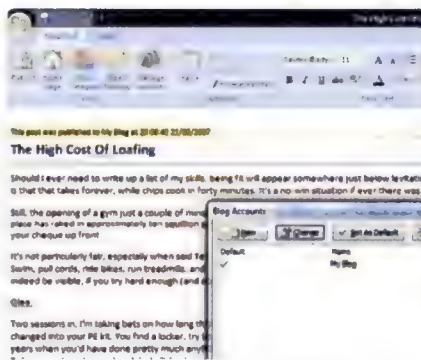
4 SECOND STEP BACK Right-click the custom animation in the Custom Animation list and then choose **Effect Options** on the drop-down menu. Click the **SmartArt Animation** tab → **Reverse order** and the animation will now run backwards.



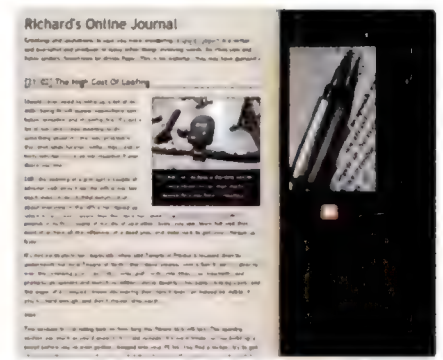
5 KEEP STILL Removing an animation is as simple as clicking on the graphic you want to remove then going to the Animations tab and clicking on **No Animation** in the Animate list. These tips should help you create eye-catching documents in no time.



4 IN STYLE Begin typing your post. Use the style window in the top right to add headers, bold text, and italics, rather than trying to make it look pretty in the editor screen. More complicated text editing will likely be thrown away when you post.



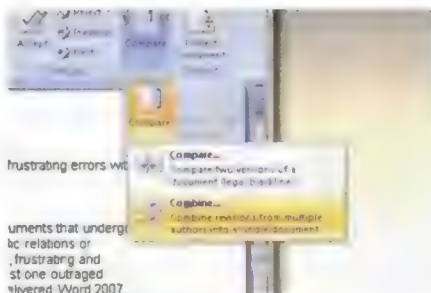
5 ARCHIVE IT To save a post, click **Save**. When you come back, Word 2007 will remember it's a blog post and adjust the Fluent interface accordingly. You can open posts later and make changes without visiting your blog's admin panel.



6 FAME AT LAST When you're finished, click **Publish**. Usefully, Word 2007 automatically puts pictures in the right place, but if you want images to go elsewhere then you'll need to set up a log-in for an FTP directory.

Merge documents with ease

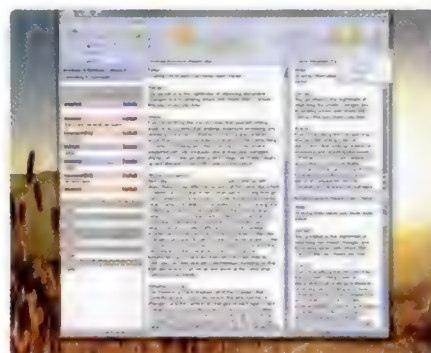
Merging two documents is now a headache-free process



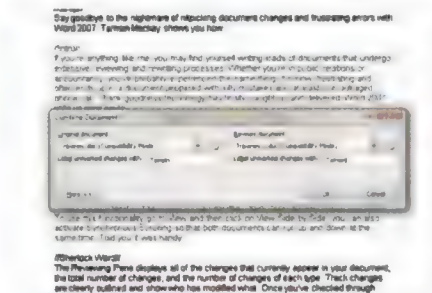
1 TWO'S COMPANY Some colleagues have edited a document and you need to put those changes into the original. Go to the Review tab and select the **Compare** → **Combine revisions from multiple authors into a single document**.



4 COMPARE AND CONTRAST You'll be presented with a range of options of what Word 2007 can say which of these comparisons you'd like Word to run, or choose all of them.



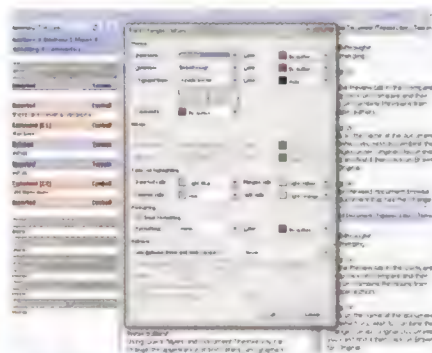
5 SEEING DOUBLE Still under Show Changes, click on **Original document** and then OK. If you want to change which documents appear on screen, choose between **Hide Source Documents** or **Show Source Documents**.



2 FIRST VERSION A new dialog box will appear. Under **Original Document**, click on the name of the document into which you wish to combine the changes. If you can't find it then click on **Browse for Original** to run a search.



3 COPYCAT Once you've found the original document, look under **Revised document** and browse for the document that has the changes from your colleagues. When you've found it, click on the **More** button.



6 CONSISTENCY When merging multiple documents you have to choose which formatting you want to keep (if it's been altered during the editing process). If you don't need to track formatting changes then clear the **Formatting** check box.

Understanding editing

Change-maker

The summary pane shows you exactly how many changes have been made and in what capacity. As you can see here, there were two insertions and two comments made to the original document.

Best of both worlds

The merged document for comparison sits in the main window with all tracking and formatting changes clearly shown. You can choose which changes are displayed and how they are shown; here you can see line changes.

Better results faster

The best way to share documents between users in the office system is to use Word 2007's Reviewing Pane. It lets you see all the changes in a document and make them as you go.

Pane relief

The Reviewing Pane menu helps you to select the view that best suits your needs. Here we have all three panes open.

The last word

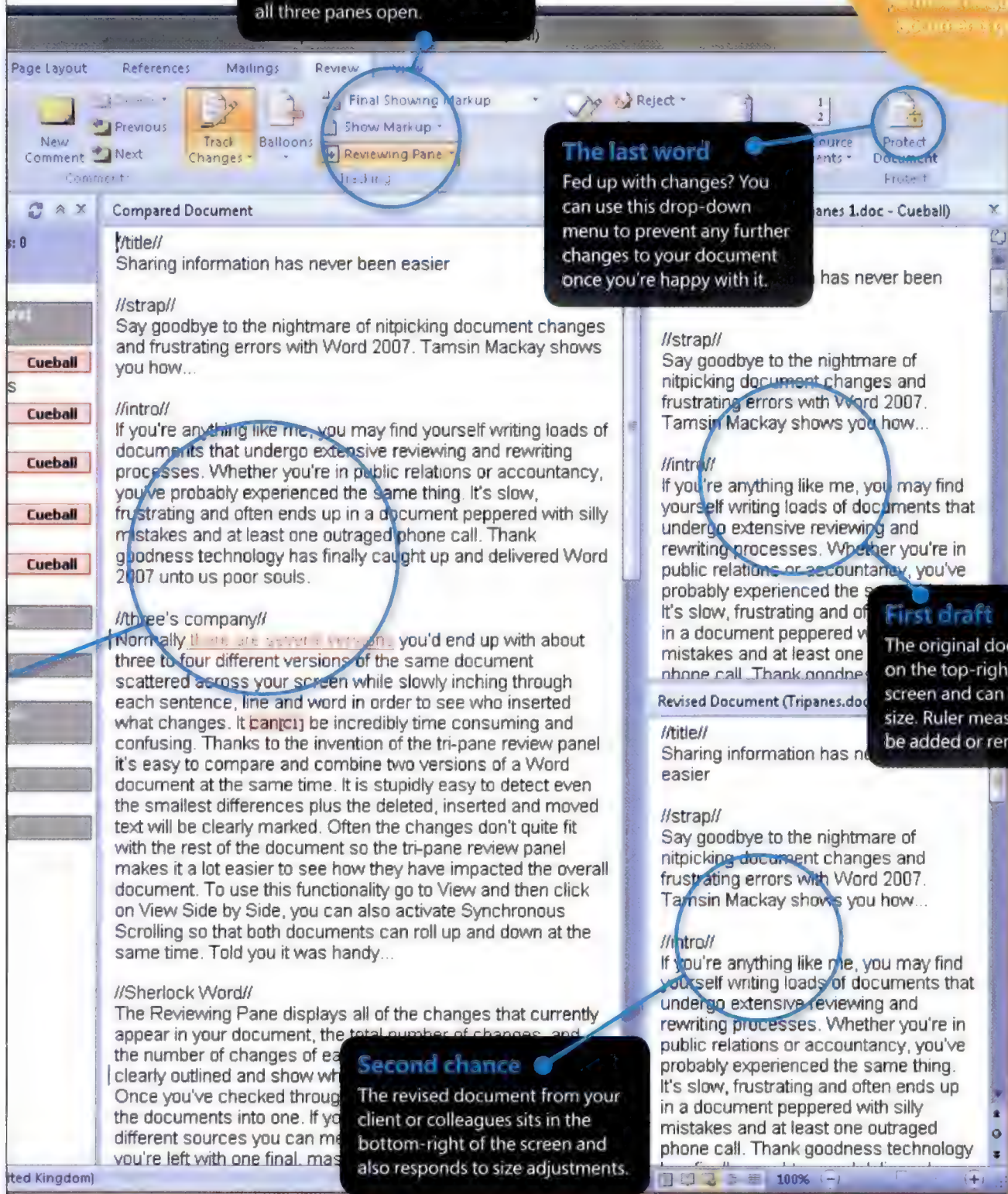
Fed up with changes? You can use this drop-down menu to prevent any further changes to your document once you're happy with it.

First draft

The original document appears on the top-right side of the screen and can be adjusted in size. Ruler measurements can be added or removed easily.

Second chance

The revised document from your client or colleagues sits in the bottom-right of the screen and also responds to size adjustments.



Microsoft Office Excel 2007

Better spreadsheets are a breeze with these helpful tips

BEST NEW FEATURES

Supports worksheets with 1,048,576 rows and 16,384 columns

Enhanced Conditional Formatting offering color scales, icons, and data bars

Column titles display mini toolbars to control layout

Multi-threaded for improved performance on multi-core systems

Page Layout view improved to display worksheets as they would be printed

New charting engine supports advanced formatting and 3D rendering, transparencies, and shadows

Easy to use PivotTables with improved data layer support

Formula Autocomplete
automatically suggests function
names

Improved filters, sorting, and AutoFilter functions



And you thought Excel was just for business...

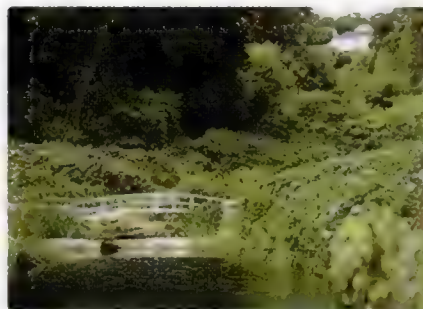
The basic Excel 2007 spreadsheet can be applied to a number of different jobs – not all of them work-related

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel 2003 interface. The menu bar includes File, Edit, Format, Tools, Window, and Help. The toolbar contains icons for saving, opening, printing, and other standard functions. The spreadsheet is titled 'Budget' and contains the following data:

Item	Unit	Quantity	Amount
Special Meeting		1	\$ 500
Personnel		1	\$ 1,000
Planning and Admin		1	\$ 1,000
Executive Office		1	\$ 1,000
Training		1	\$ 1,000
Information Systems		1	\$ 1,000
Development		1	\$ 1,000
Planning Staff		1	\$ 1,000
Administrative		1	\$ 1,000
Development		1	\$ 1,000
Planning Staff		1	\$ 1,000
Information Systems		1	\$ 1,000
Executive Office		1	\$ 1,000
Total			\$ 14,700
Budget			\$ 14,700

The status bar at the bottom indicates the active cell is A1 and the sheet is named 'Budget'.

1 TAKEOUT MENU Enter your favorite dishes and prices from your local takeout place, and the amount of money you have to spend on your meal, to make sure you make the most of your dining budget.



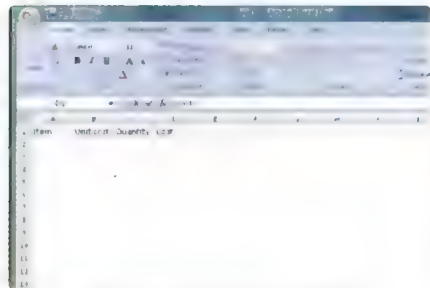
2 HOLIDAY COSTS If you prefer planning your own vacation rather than using a travel agent's package deal, use a similar spreadsheet to keep track of hotels, travel fares, and other getaway expenses.



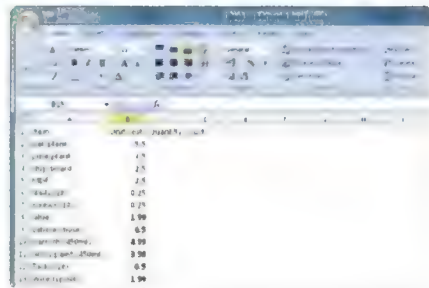
3 PC BUDGET Planning to put together your own PC? Use the spreadsheet to list the cost of the components that you'll use and make sure that you stay within your computer-building budget.

You can quote me on that

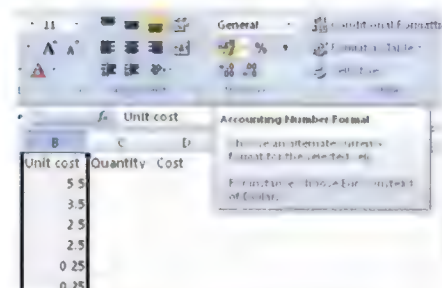
Set up your basic business quote spreadsheet from scratch



1 CREATE HEADINGS First off, obviously, you must launch Office Excel 2007. Starting with a completely blank spreadsheet, enter the following headings into the top cells of columns A-D: Item, Unit Cost, Quantity, and Cost.



2 PRICE LIST You now need to enter the information that will remain the same each time you use this spreadsheet. In column A, enter each of the materials you use plus one entry for labor. Put the prices of each of these into column B.



3 CURRENCY FORMAT We want to make sure that the prices appear as money, so highlight column B by clicking the **B** at the top. Now, above Number on the Fluent interface, click the **Currency** button, which is marked with coins and a note.

1	Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Cost
2	Oak plank	\$5.50	0	
3	Pine plank	\$3.50	0	
4	Chip board	\$2.50	0	
5	MDF	\$2.50	0	
6	Nails (10)	\$0.25	0	
7	Screws (10)	\$0.25	0	
8	Glue	\$1.99	0	
9	Labor (hours)	\$15.00	0	
10	Varnish (450ml)	\$4.99	0	
11	Gloss paint (450ml)	\$3.98	0	
12	Tacks (10)	\$0.50	0	
13	Wire (spool)	\$1.99	0	

4 CALCULATE COST In the Quantity column, enter zero for each quantity for now. Select cell D2 and enter the formula **=B2*C2**. Press Enter and this value will be worked out. You can format this column as currency as well.

1	Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Cost
2	Oak plank	\$5.50	0	
3	Pine plank	\$3.50	0	
4	Chip board	\$2.50	0	
5	MDF	\$2.50	0	
6	Nails (10)	\$0.25	0	
7	Screws (10)	\$0.25	0	
8	Glue	\$1.99	0	
9	Labor (hours)	\$15.00	0	
10	Varnish (450ml)	\$4.99	0	
11	Gloss paint (450ml)	\$3.98	0	
12	Tacks (10)	\$0.50	0	
13	Wire (spool)	\$1.99	0	
14	Glass plate	\$2.50	0	

5 COPY FORMULA We need to extend this formula so that it's in each of the cells below D2. Move the pointer to the bottom right of the cell and click and drag over the cells you want to put it into. Release the mouse button and it will be copied.

1	Item	Unit cost	Quantity	Cost
2	Oak plank	\$5.50	0	
3	Pine plank	\$3.50	0	
4	Chip board	\$2.50	0	
5	MDF	\$2.50	0	
6	Nails (10)	\$0.25	0	
7	Screws (10)	\$0.25	0	
8	Glue	\$1.99	0	
9	Labor (hours)	\$15.00	0	
10	Varnish (450ml)	\$4.99	0	
11	Gloss paint (450ml)	\$3.98	0	
12	Tacks (10)	\$0.50	0	
13	Wire (spool)	\$1.99	0	
14	Glass plate	\$2.50	0	

6 TOTAL COST In column A, add labels for Total, Budget, and Variance. Highlight the cell in column D opposite Total. On the Fluent interface above Editing, click **Autosum** Σ . Click and drag over all the cells in column D and press Enter to add them up.



4 DECORATION BUDGET You need to paint the living room of your home and have a set budget. Why not use the spreadsheet to help you decide what equipment you can buy, what you'll need to borrow, and what paint you can afford?



5 CHILDREN'S PARTY BAGS Your little one's having a party and you need to make sure that all 12 guests get an equal party bag. Use the spreadsheet to try out different combinations of sweets and toys without blowing your party-planning expenses.

Get connected

When you're ready to push your planning further, you can connect your Excel 2007 spreadsheet to an Access 2007 database, linking data – such as prices or budgets – between the two. That way, when the database is updated, so is the information in your spreadsheet, meaning your quotes are always constant.

Microsoft Office Power Point 2007

Make an impact in your next presentation

BEST NEW FEATURES

Improvements to text rendering to support text-based graphics

Support for 3D graphics

Support for tables and enhanced support for table pasting from Excel 2007

Slide Library, which enables you to re-use any slide or presentation as a template

Any custom-designed slide library can be saved

Presentations can be digitally signed

Improved Presenter View

Added support for widescreen slides

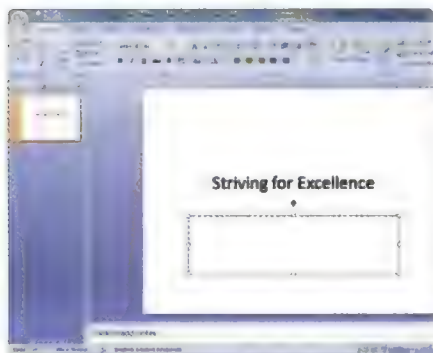
Allows addition of custom placeholders

New SmartArt tool for quick and easy creation of impressive diagrams

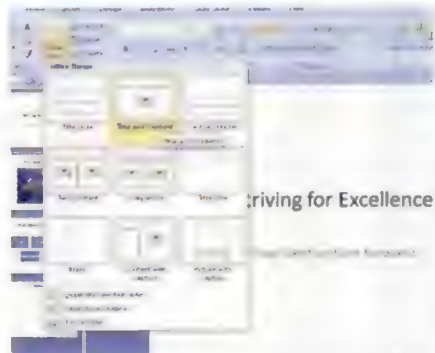


Creating your presentation

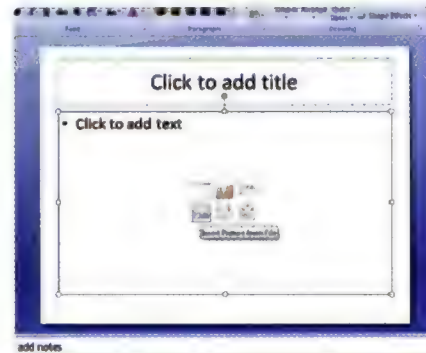
It's easy to create and fine-tune your PowerPoint slideshow



1 TITLE SLIDE When you first launch PowerPoint 2007, it opens with a blank title slide for you to complete. Click "Click to add title" and enter the title. Do the same for the subtitle and save your work by clicking the disk icon in the top left of the toolbar.



2 NEW SLIDE Ensure that the Home tab of the Fluent interface is selected and choose **New Slide**, clicking the down arrow part of this button. Select the kind of slide you'd like to add to the presentation. You can change this later in the Layout tab.



3 ADD CONTENT Click the title and enter the words you want to use. In the lower part of the slide, select the kind of content you want to insert. In this case we'll choose a picture, browsing to the one that we want to use from the hard drive.

Get to know the basics

Control panel

Use the Office button to access different file options such as Save As... and Print. It's like a Start Menu for the 2007 Office suite.

Instant makeover

To quickly alter the overall design of your presentation, switch to the Design tab to select different themes, fonts, and effects.

Home sweet home

The Home tab reveals the most commonly used tools in the Fluent interface. They're the building blocks you need to make a simple presentation.

Slide on

Use the New Slide button to add another slide to your presentation. Click the arrow to select the kind of slide you want, else you'll be given the last type selected.

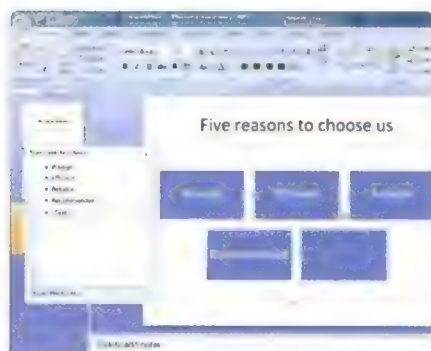
Existing slides

This pane displays thumbnails of the slides that you've already created. Select one to go to and edit the slide concerned.

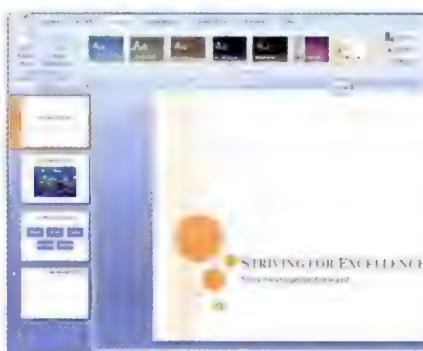
Using templates

Need a ready-made presentation? There may be a template that can help get you going

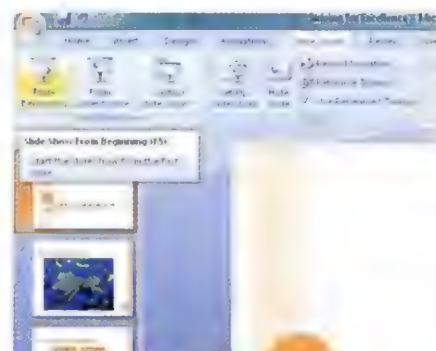
Themes take the headache out of applying a uniform design to your slides, but they don't help you out with the content. However, a template could contain everything you need. Launch PowerPoint 2007 and click the Office button. Select **New** and choose **Presentations**. Under **Microsoft Office Online** decide on the kind of presentation that you want to make and then choose a suitable template. All you need to do now is replace the sample content with your own information to create your slideshow.



4 ADD A LIST Repeat the process for each slide you want to add. Here we've chosen another title and content slide but have added a list to the content. Each item has its own block to enclose the text. Animations to introduce each item work well.



5 REDESIGN So far the slideshow looks very plain. You can change this by using the Design tab on the Fluent interface. Move the mouse over one of the themes to see the current slide preview that theme. Click a theme to apply it to the slideshow.



6 PRESENT THE SHOW When you've finished making your slides, save the presentation. Now move to the Slide Show tab on the Fluent interface. Above Start Slide Show, choose **From Beginning** to start the show. Left-click to advance each slide.

Microsoft Office Outlook 2007

Get connected and stay organized with Outlook's new features

BEST NEW FEATURES

Indexing of e-mails, contacts, tasks, calendar entries and other items for high-speed searches

Word-wheeled searches – displays results as characters are typed

New search and RSS feed folders

Outlook 2007 supports text messages and SMSes when used in conjunction with Exchange Server 2007 Unified Messaging

Multiple calendar support with overlay editing and viewing

Online calendar support and sharing

To-do Bar displays current calendar, tasks, and urgent messages

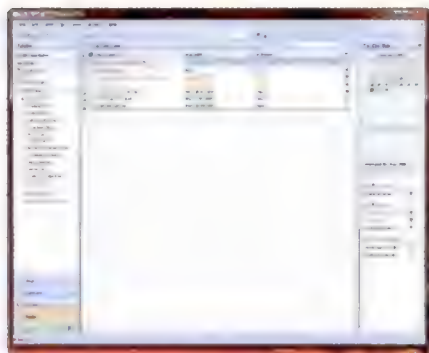
Contacts can be shared among users, via e-mail, Exchange Server 2007, or a Microsoft SharePoint site

Attachment preview allows users to view e-mail attachments in the reading pane

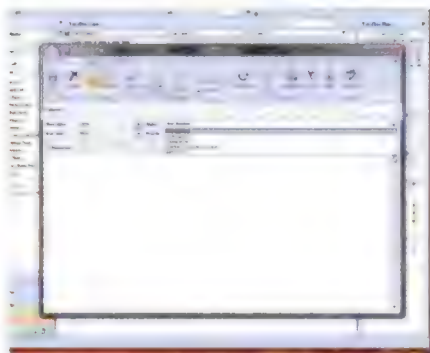


Learn the secrets of perfect planning

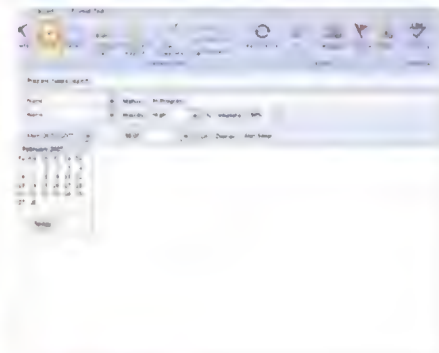
Remember what you're doing and when you're doing it by making the ultimate 'To Do' list



1 TASK MASTER Not every demand on your time makes itself known in the form of an e-mail. To prioritize your To Do's, click the **Tasks** tab at the lower-left of Outlook. Here, you can simply list everything you need to get done – but that's just the start.

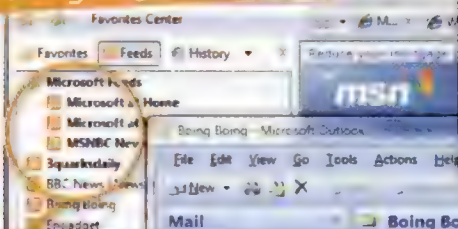


2 MAKE A DATE Double-click on an empty line in the main part of Outlook and the New Task window will open. Here you can create a 'To Do' entry as if it were a meeting in the Outlook calendar. Give it a name and a start and due-by date.



3 ON TOP OF IT The job will appear both in the main Tasks pane and in your Calendar (under the date it's due on). If you revisit it from either spot, you can tinker with it – update how close it is to being finished, add notes or reminders, or change the deadline.

Getting to grips with RSS



Alternatively...

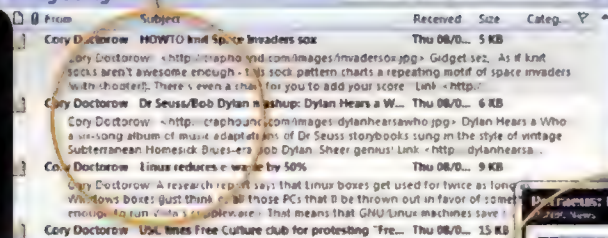
If you've set Outlook 2007 and Internet Explorer 7 to synchronise their feeds, you'll see the same list of subscriptions by clicking the gold star icon in Internet Explorer. You can delete, rename and add new feeds from here if you prefer.

Managing stories

Each new headline from a feed you've subscribed to appears as though it were an e-mail message – you'll find them in the site's subfolder under the main RSS Feeds folder. You can read, delete, forward, and move each story just as you would with a standard e-mail.

Even more news

The Windows Vista Sidebar also shares the Common Feeds list, so you'll see the latest headlines from your subscriptions show up in the Feed Headlines gadget if you've added it. Click the spinner icon to choose which feeds you want it to display.



HOWTO knit Space Invaders sock

Cory Doctorow

Click here to view the full article in your default Web browser or to download the article as an attachment.

Thu 08-03-2007 15:49

Cory Doctorow Gadget sez, "As if knit socks aren't awesome enough - this pattern charts a repeating motif of space invaders (with shooter!). There's even a chart for you to add your own twist. (Thanks, Gadget!)"



De Seuss/Rob Dylan mashup: Dylan Hears a Who

Cory Doctorow

Cory Doctorow A research report says that Linux boxes get used for twice as long as Windows boxes just think of all those PCs that'll be thrown out in favor of something more fun to run Vista's capabilities. That means that GNU/Linux machines save the world a ton of money. (Thanks, Gadget!)"

Thu 08-03-2007 15:49

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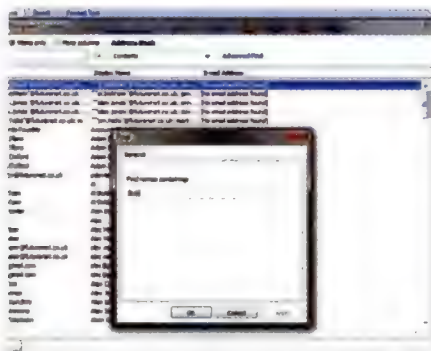
Thu 08-03-2007 15:49

The news reel

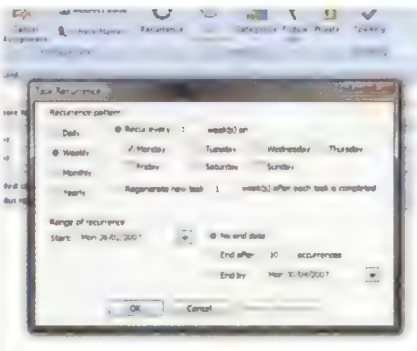
Here's the list of currently subscribed feeds. You can set different configurations for each, such as whether it automatically downloads complete stories and whether it checks for new headlines at a rate set by the site or by you.

Find out more

This blue bar appears on each story. Clicking on it gives you the option to view the complete article in your Web browser or to download the piece as an attachment to this 'message' (if this feed isn't set to do so automatically anyway).



4 PHONE A FRIEND You can involve other people in your task. Delegate to a colleague or underling by clicking **Assign Task** at the top left, then choose an e-mail recipient. They'll get the details by e-mail and the job will appear in their Outlook 2007 Tasks and Calendar panes.



5 PROGRESS REPORT You can send a status report to your boss when you make progress – it's a button in the **Manage Task** area of the Microsoft Office Fluent interface. If it's something you do regularly, clicking **Recurrence** will have Outlook remind you when it's due again.

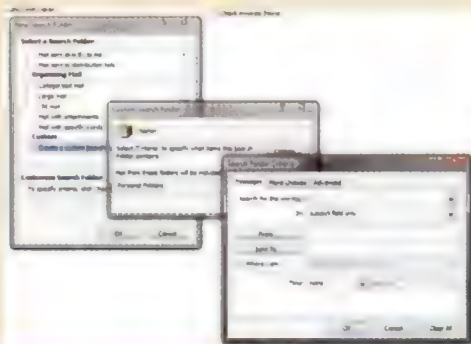
Best before dates

With Microsoft Outlook 2007 you can set expiration dates for your e-mails. Just click the **Message Options** arrow, and once the mail is no longer a priority it will appear with a strikethrough in the recipient's inbox. You can also prevent people from forwarding sensitive mail by clicking the **Permissions** arrow.

Search folders

You never need to worry about missing messages again

A search folder is a continually updated archive of every message matching certain features – e-mails from a specific person, for example, or messages with a certain subject line or sent before a given date. There are a few folders already set up – like Unread Mail and Large Mail, but to create a new one just right-click on **Search Folders** on the left-hand side of the Outlook Mail pane, then click **New Search Folder**. Choose the details you want it to look out for, and from then on clicking on its name under **Search Folders** will show everything that matches. It's updated with any new messages that match, so you don't need to do anything else yourself.



News to go

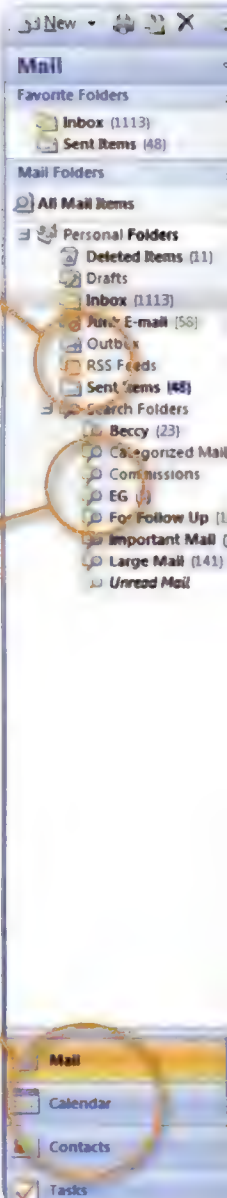
You can subscribe to RSS news feeds from your favorite websites and have new headlines and short summaries downloaded into your inbox as they happen. Outlook 2007 will share feeds from Internet Explorer 7 and you can subscribe to feeds e-mailed by other Outlook 2007 users.

Saved searches

Here are your Search Folders – these check every new message to see if it fits any custom criteria you've set up. If it does, it'll appear instantly – along with any other matches – just by clicking on the folder name.

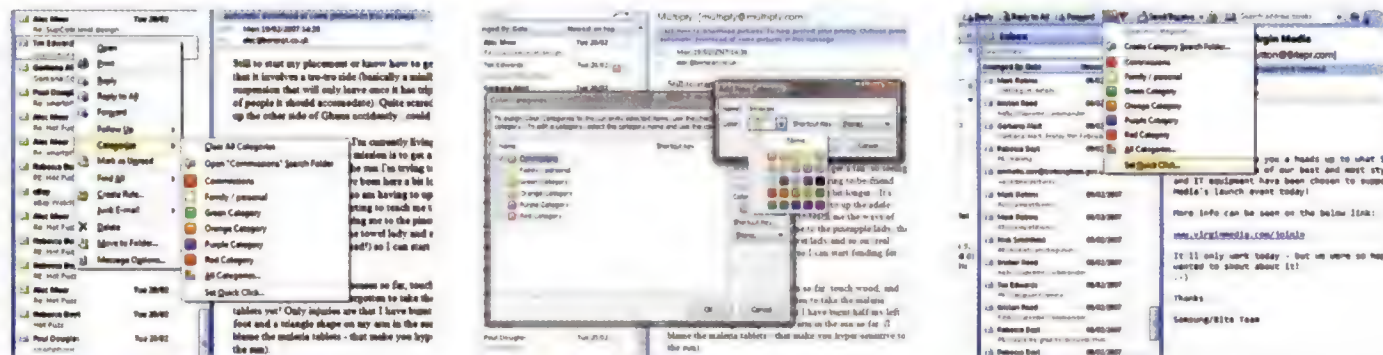
Mode-switcher

This unassuming panel is key to controlling Outlook 2007. A click on each of these four major modes switches the interface into one more suited to its new purpose. There's also the option to add extra buttons for Notes, Journal, and Shortcuts.



Ultimate message management

All that e-mail getting the best of you? Here's how to sort it quickly and easily.....



1 COLOR-COORDINATED Whenever an important e-mail arrives, right-click on it, then select the **Categorize** option to tag it with a colored icon for quick reference later on. There are six default colors, but you can make more by clicking **All Categories**.

2 UNIQUE FILTERS This opens the **Color Categories** window. Click **New** to create a custom category, with its own name and a color chosen from the drop-down list next to **Color**. Or just click **Rename** or **Color** to alter one of the existing categories.

3 QUICK CLICK If there's one category you use a lot, hit the icon showing four colored squares and choose **Set Quick Click**. Pick your preferred category and from then on one click of the square after an e-mail in your inbox will add it to that category.

Instant results
Like Windows Vista, Outlook 2007 includes an instant search function – type a word, phrase or obscure sequence of numbers into here and any matching results in the folder you're looking at will appear almost straight away.

Choose a view
How you view your messages is massively customizable. Instead of this view, each entry in the inbox could have a short preview of the full message displayed under it, or you could have only the messages of the last seven days displayed, or something more specific.

Never forget
The To Do bar lurks to the right of the screen in most of Outlook 2007's modes, so there's a constant friendly reminder of what pressing jobs are coming up in the near future. Double-clicking on a task will show you more details or let you tweak it.

Featured Product
FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION Now on DVD

Current Contest
The Best of the Electric Company V... Hey you guys! Shout! Factory is offering up a... serving of childhood nostalgia with The Electric Company, Volume 2. Win your... from TheOnion.com and Shout! Fac...

To-Do Bar
February 2007
Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa Su
1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28
No upcoming appointments

Next Month
Outlook tutorial

4 MAIL SORT You can create a rule that automatically adds any messages meeting certain criteria to a category. Right-click on a message, click **Create rule** and then **Advanced options**. Check the boxes next to the filters you want to apply.

5 FINE TUNE Clicking a blue underlined word lets you specify an exact requirement, such as a certain name or subject. With 'Assigned to category category', clicking the first 'category' lets you pick which custom category the e-mail goes into.

6 FOLLOW IT UP You can also set a prompt to follow up emails you can't deal with right away. Right-click on the message, choose **Follow Up** and say when you should reply. Then click **Add reminder** and tell Outlook 2007 when to nag you.

It's a Wireless, Wireless

Bread and butter. Whip cream and strawberry pie. Tom Cruise and Katie ...well, you get the idea. Some things were just meant to go together. And for road warriors who need to stay connected to the Internet, nothing beats a wireless connection. Windows Vista was made with mobility in mind. With just a few clicks, you can tap into your e-mail, check the latest stock quotes, or look for movie showtimes – all without plugging in a cable. Your Windows Vista laptop gives you a one-stop-shop for finding wireless networks, configuring access, and connecting quickly.

One of the many perks to using wireless in Windows Vista is that the technology is now integrated into the operating system in a single network window. When a wireless network becomes available, Windows Vista will prompt you to connect to the network, and then remember your settings for the next time you come within range of the signal—including a security key that you only have to enter once. A new router setup process walks you through the steps clearly and efficiently—automatically configuring security without forcing you to use a third-party installer that is different for every router model under the sun. Because security is automatically configured, your files will be safer when they travel over the airwaves, and your PC will be less susceptible to a virus or spyware attacks.

World

Windows Vista's roaming features make it easy to work from anywhere. Here's everything you need to know to set your PC free

By John Brandon



Inside:

Wireless Basics	Page 34
Easy Router Installation	Page 38
Wireless Add-Ons	Page 40
3G Cellular	Page 42

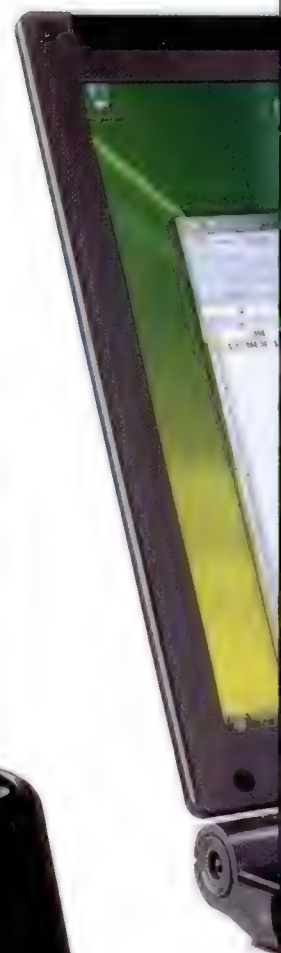
Wireless Basics

Before we dive into how you can create and access a wireless network, let's get to know the basics



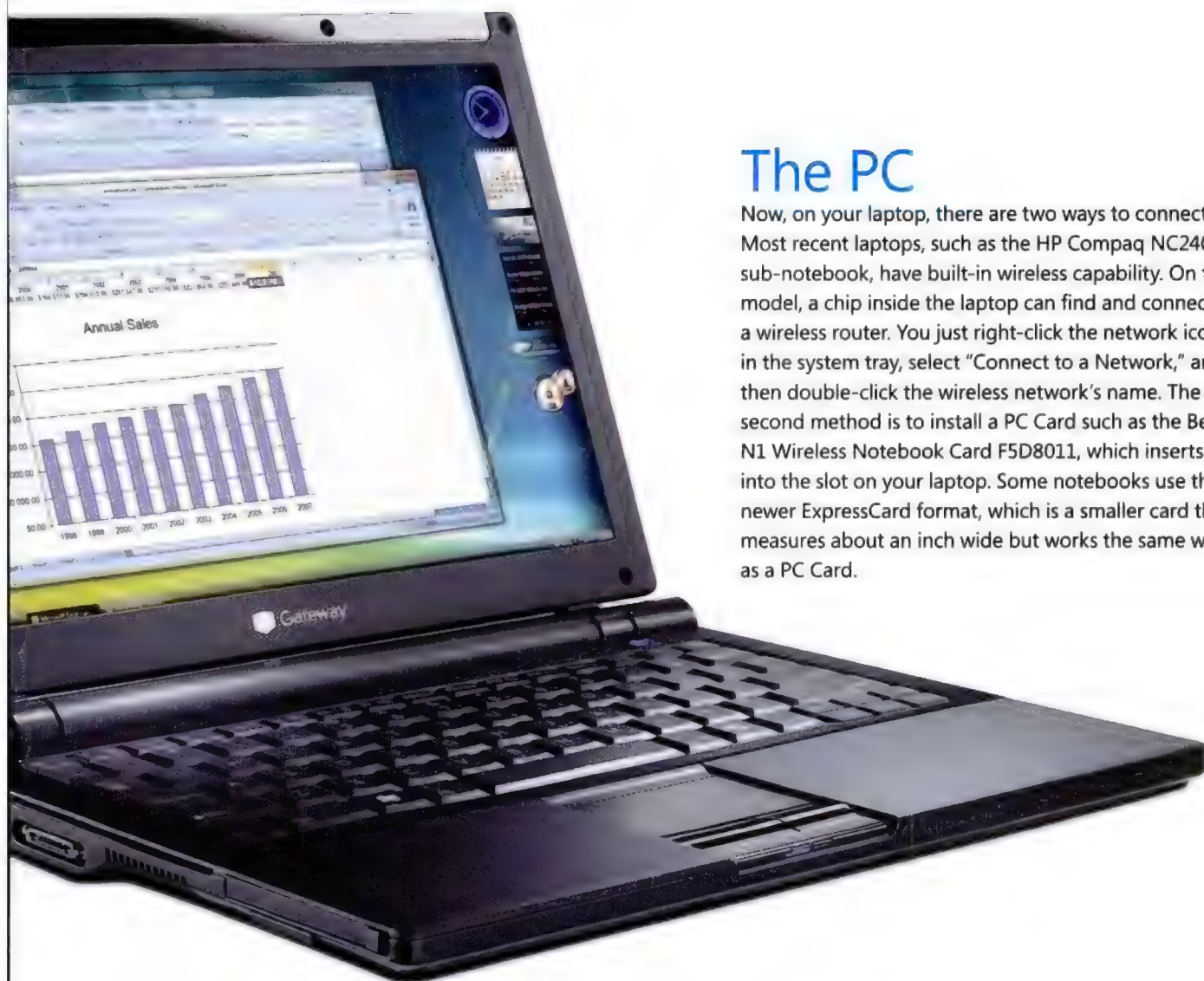
LOCKDOWN

When you bring your new wireless router home from the store, take a moment to customize it. Otherwise, you'll not only leave your home network open to digital prowlers—you'll also be broadcasting to the whole neighborhood that you're a wireless newbie. In particular, give your wireless network a unique SSID name, rather than leaving it set to the default, which is usually the make and/or model of the router. Nothing screams "Come and get me!" to a Wi-Fi predator quite like an unprotected network named "linksys". More important still, be sure to change the administrator password on your router. That way, even if you decide to leave your network open so your neighbors can use it to get online, only you will be able to change the router's settings.



The Router

The core of any Wi-Fi network is the router, which is a small box that plugs into your cable or DSL modem. It works like this: You connect your modem into the router, and then the router shares the Internet with other devices in your home. Any wireless-enabled computer within a few hundred feet can use your router to access the Internet, and to access other computers on your network. The wireless signal works just like a cordless phone: the router is the "base" and your laptop is the "phone" that sends and receives the signal. If there are lots of routers in your neighborhood, you can switch the channel your router uses to avoid interference problems, in much the same way as you would switch channels on a cordless phone.



The PC

Now, on your laptop, there are two ways to connect. Most recent laptops, such as the HP Compaq NC2400 sub-notebook, have built-in wireless capability. On this model, a chip inside the laptop can find and connect to a wireless router. You just right-click the network icon in the system tray, select "Connect to a Network," and then double-click the wireless network's name. The second method is to install a PC Card such as the Belkin N1 Wireless Notebook Card F5D8011, which inserts into the slot on your laptop. Some notebooks use the newer ExpressCard format, which is a smaller card that measures about an inch wide but works the same way as a PC Card.



TM

CERTIFIED FOR
Windows
Vista®

THE RIGHT GEAR

It's important to know that some products work more seamlessly with Windows Vista than others. For example, the D-Link DIR-655 router is Certified for Windows Vista. So it will appear in the Network window automatically, supports Windows Connect Now technology, and doesn't require a separate driver or installation process. That certainly makes setting up your network a lot easier.

Does this mean you can only use Certified for Windows Vista routers with your Windows Vista PC? Not at all. The truth is, Windows Vista makes it easier to connect to any wireless network, thanks to its simplified connection interface. But if you are in the market for a new wireless router, be sure to look for the Certified for Windows Vista logo.

It's a Wireless, Wireless World

Wireless Hotspots

A wireless hotspot allows you to connect to the Internet from a public location, often for free. For example, many local coffee shops provide a free hotspot for wireless access, as do many libraries, colleges, airports, and bus terminals. Some locations – such as Starbucks – charge a nominal fee per day or per month so you can connect to the Internet whenever you visit. Hotspots are usually “rate limited” in that they won’t run nearly as fast as your home router. For example, your broadband speed at home might run at 3Mbps, and the D-Link DIR-655 router runs as fast as 100Mbps. So, Internet access will be lightening fast, and if you transfer large files between computers on your network, it will take just a few minutes. Conversely, a hotspot might run at only 1Mbps or so for all Internet access and file-sharing. Some hotspots won’t even let you share files between two computers. Some cities have widespread wireless access available in most parts of their business districts. This means you can connect with your laptop for free, even from a car or at a restaurant that does not provide its own hotspot. Be advised, though, that a hotspot is not perfectly secure: most are just open networks, so any hacker could potentially tap into your laptop and steal files, install a virus, or even disable your system altogether. Some have been known to use a laptop connected over a hotspot as a “zombie” computer that sends out viruses or spam messages, all without the laptop owner’s knowledge or consent. That’s why security software, such as Norton Internet Security or Microsoft Windows Live OneCare, is so important.

SECURITY WARNING

Wireless encryption is a powerful technique that makes sure your data is protected when it leaves your laptop. However, both WWAN (see page 42) and Wi-Fi connections can leave your laptop vulnerable to an outsider accessing your hard disk and stealing information. As a first line of defense: make sure you have enabled the Windows Firewall. Go to Start > Control Panel > Windows Firewall and click Turn Windows Firewall On or Off. This blocks hackers from tapping into the files and folders on your computer.



Get Ready for 802.11n

There's been a healthy amount of buzz about the 802.11n wireless standard – and not all of the talk has been positive. This standard – which has to go through a lengthy process of certification to make sure it will work with multiple devices that all connect to each other – will probably be approved by the end of 2007, according to wireless networking analyst Chris Matthias from the Farpoint Group. What it means for Windows Vista users is that, once approved, we will be able to connect much faster than the older 802.11g standard.

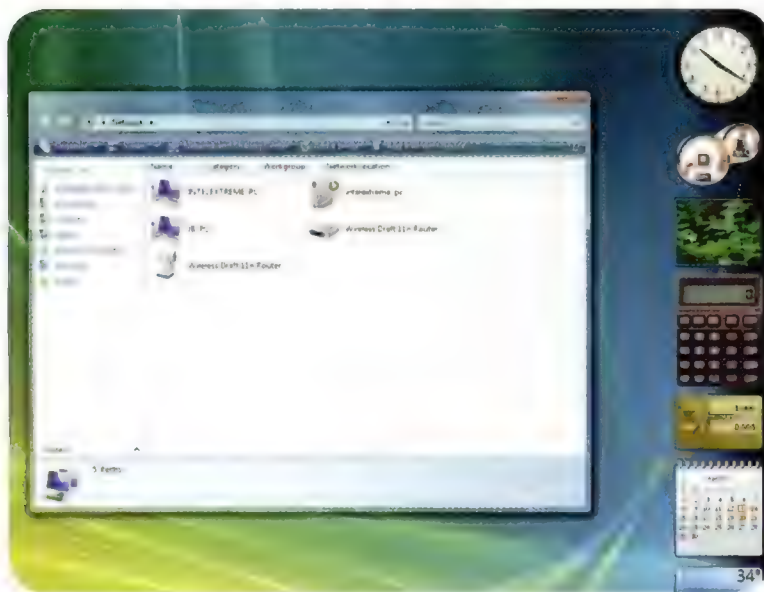
802.11n products from Netgear, Belkin, D-Link, and others all support the draft specification of 802.11n. This means you can enjoy the fast 100Mbps access in your home, at least up until the standard is approved. After that point, you may need to use a firmware patch – something you can download from the Internet – and apply it to the router. Or, in a worst-case scenario – you may have to send the router into the manufacturer for an update. The approved standard might not provide the same speed as the draft standard, but otherwise the risk of choosing 802.11n products is minimal.

There is one caveat with 802.11n, however. While the speed of access is incredibly high, the coverage area is not better than 802.11g. In fact, older routers such as the Belkin Pre-N will provide up to 1,500 feet of coverage at about 40Mbps, while an 802.11n router such as the D-Link DIR-655 will provide only about 600 feet of coverage in your home.



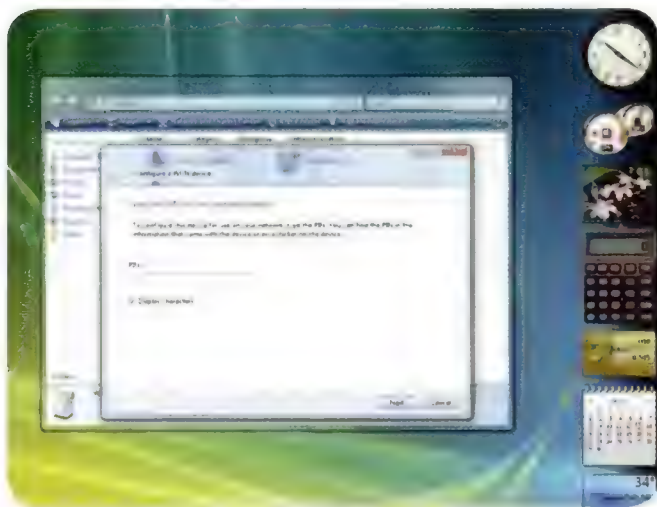
Easy Wireless Install

Here's how to set up a wireless network in your home, and then attach to and make the most of the network once everything is working properly.



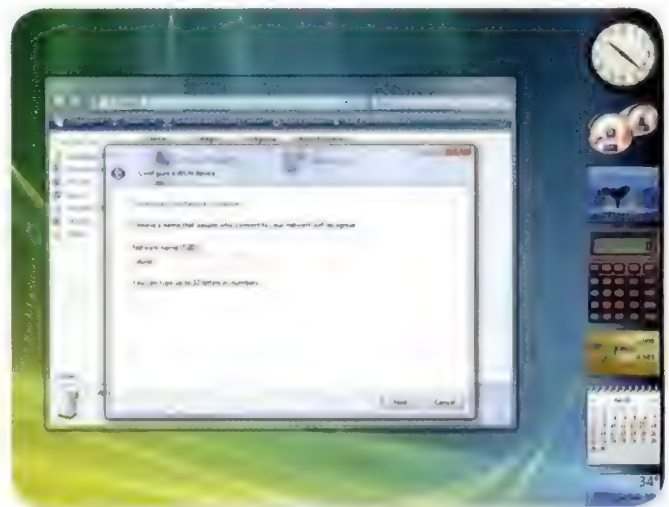
1 Connect the Hardware

Unpack your wireless router. Using the included Ethernet cable, connect your Cable or DSL modem to the Internet (or WAN) port – usually separated from the other ports – on the router. Connect your PC to one of the other four ports using another Ethernet cable. Now, plug in the power adapter to a wall outlet and into the router. Turn the router upside down and write down the WPS number. WPS stands for Wi-Fi Protected Setup, a way to quickly configure a router. In Windows Vista, the feature is called Windows Connect Now – which uses WPS and makes the setup process as quick and efficient as possible. Using the computer with the wired connected, go to Start > Network. You will see the icon for your router. Right-click on it and select Enable. Eventually, another icon for the router will appear – it looks like a small refrigerator. Right-click on it and select Configure.



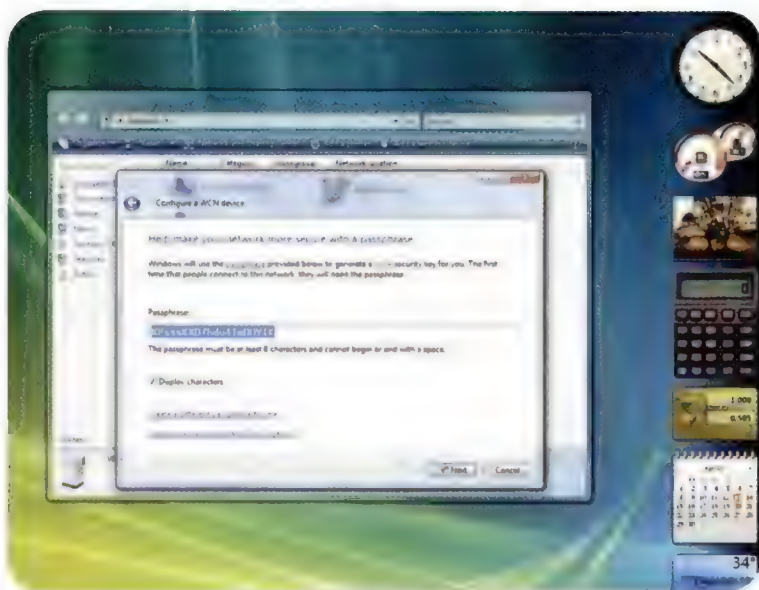
2 Enter the PIN

When you do, a prompt to enter the PIN will appear. This is the WPS number you wrote down earlier. Type it in and click Next.



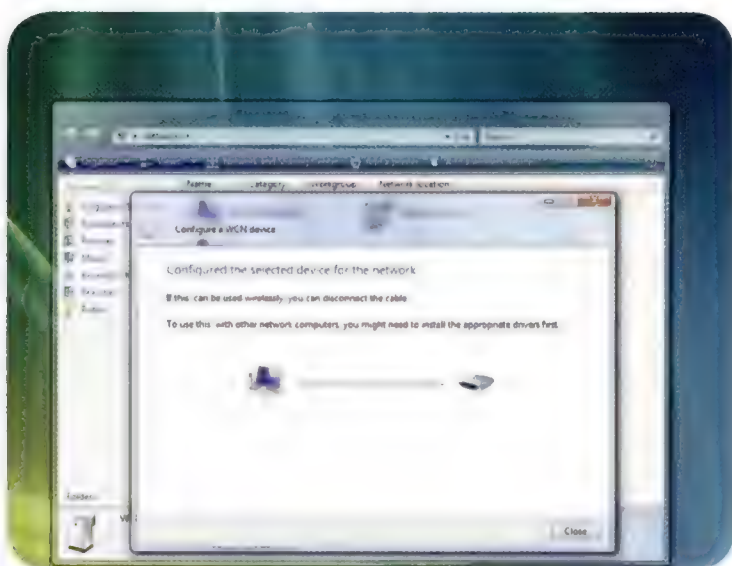
3 Name the Network

Now enter a name for the network. This is also known as the SSID (Service Set Identifier). This name will appear on your laptop when you connect using Windows Vista. You can give it any name you like, but for better security, avoid using the router's brand name, which can give hackers too much information. Just pick a name that you can easily remember. and click Next.



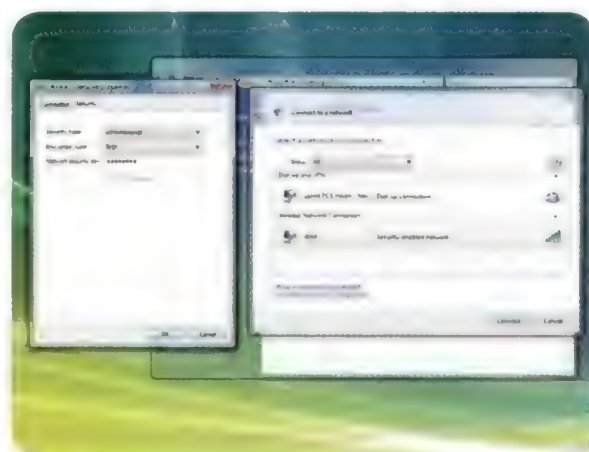
4 Use a Passphrase

Windows Vista will suggest a passphrase for your network. By default, Vista will use the strongest network security available. For most new routers, that's WPA-Personal with TKIP. This security measure prevents hackers from tapping into an "open" unprotected network. Anyone who attempts to access your router will need to type in the passphrase. Once they are connected, the connection will be protected with encryption technology. It's wise to use the suggested passphrase because it is extremely difficult to break – since it uses both letter and numbers. You can just type an easier-to-remember phrase, such as "mynet44" if you want. Still, a simple rule: if you don't have to write down the passphrase, it's probably easier for a hacker to break. A longer passphrase is best. Now, click Next.



5 Final configuration

Windows Vista will configure the router and then make the wireless signal available in your home, usually within an area of about 600 feet from the router. For the best speed and distance, make sure you move or turn off any devices that might interfere with the router coverage area, such as a portable phone or baby monitor. Click Close.



6 Connect from a laptop

Now, on your laptop, look for the network icon in the system tray on the lower right. Some laptops require that you press a button to enable the wireless radio—consult the manual that came with your computer for more details. Right-click the network icon and select "Connect to a network." In the dialog box that appears, you will see the network name (SSID) for the router. Before connecting, right-click the name and select Properties. Click the Security tab. Select WPA-Personal and TKIP from the pop-ups, then type the passphrase for the router. Click OK. Windows Vista will connect to the router.

Note: For this tutorial, we're using a D-Link router that support WPS (Wireless Protected Setup) and WCN (Windows Connect Now) setup. Another popular router that supports WPS and WCN is the Buffalo AirStation Wireless-N Nfiniti Dual Band Router & AP. With an older wireless router, you will have to use the Windows XP installer that came on CD, or configure the router manually by opening Internet Explorer and typing the IP address of the router (listed in the user manual). Another trick: You can right-click the router icon in the Network window and select "View device webpage."

It's a Wireless, Wireless World

Wireless Add-Ons

These wireless accessories will make your network more useful – and even help you connect easier and faster

Trendnet TV-IP400W Wireless Webcam

A wireless webcam is a smart addition in your home. The Trendnet TV-IP400W Wireless Webcam provides a wireless video signal that you can access in your home for security, or for home monitoring over the Internet while you are away. You can access the webcam in Windows Vista by going to the Network window and double-clicking the camera. Then, you can click buttons to move the camera (pan, tilt, and zoom) for complete control over the video feed.



Netgear Digital Entertainer HD EVA-8000

One last addition for your network is a digital streaming device. The Netgear Digital Entertainer HD requires no configuration in Windows Vista at all. Once you add the device to your network by selecting the network during setup on the EVA-8000, it will automatically find shared folders that contain videos, music, and photos. You can even stream Windows Media HD files in 720p format.



Belkin N1 USB Adapter F5D8051

Most laptops have built-in wireless networking, but some sub-compact and older models do not. And not every laptop has a PC Card slot for adding a network card. For those laptops, you can just plug in this USB adapter and still enjoy the fast 100Mbps real-world speeds of 802.11n. For the best performance with this adapter, you will also need the matching Belkin N1 wireless router (\$150).

Xbox 360 Wireless Networking Adapter

Windows Vista works extremely well with the Xbox 360. For wireless connectivity, you can add the Xbox 360 Wireless Networking Adapter, which plugs into a free USB port on the game console. Thankfully, there's very little configuration, because the Xbox 360 configures itself for the adapter. You will need to select your wireless network and enter your passphrase. Once you do, you can stream music and movies from your Windows Vista PC, and use the Internet to play multiplayer games on the Xbox 360.



D-Link DWA-643 Xtreme N Notebook ExpressCard

Newer laptops provide a slim ExpressCard slot that saves space and weight. The D-Link DWA-643 wireless card is designed to pair with the D-Link DIR-655 N router, so you can expect throughput of up to 100Mbps for screaming fast network file transfers, back-ups, VoIP phone calls, and video streaming. It also comes with a Windows Vista driver that's easy to load and uses the Windows Vista's built-in wireless network features.

It's a Wireless, Wireless World

3G Data

Forget hotspots. Cellular data cards let you work from almost anywhere



If you are always on the go – spending more time at the airport than at the office – a 3G (short for “third generation”) cellular network is probably for you. Slower than Wi-Fi, yet more widely available, 3G will help you get connected more often. More and more laptops are equipped with WWAN (wireless wide area network) capability, which use cellular networks for Internet access. You can also buy a WWAN card for your laptop, such as the Sprint Mobile Broadband Card S720, the Verizon V640 EVDO Express-Card, or the AT&T LaptopConnect Card 875. The concept of “3G” (which means “third generation”) is that the cellular towers we have been using for decades can now provide laptop data access at speeds of around 1Mbps.

Mobile Advantage

A WWAN connection is very different from a Wi-Fi connection in that it uses cellular towers to cover large geographical areas. A Wi-Fi network, meanwhile, covers only a few hundred feet. A Wi-Fi connection can be secured with strong encryption to make sure no one can break into your laptop and steal files; a 3G network is usually more



open, although they do use a technique to change frequencies with each transmission to make it extremely difficult for a hacker to find the signal and break into it. A home wireless connection might run at 100 Mbps for file sharing and will provide super-fast broadband speeds. In fact, whatever speed you use for your Cable or DSL modem – such as 3Mbps – will also be used over a wireless network. A 3G network will typically run at 600-1300Kbps, and will vary based on the number of people connected, your proximity to the cellular tower, and even whether you are close to buildings and large bodies of water that can affect the cellular signal.

Pick a Carrier

Picking the best 3G wireless carrier is just like picking a cellular company, because 3G carriers *are* cellular companies. And just like cellular calls, 3G connection quality depends heavily on your whereabouts. So the first thing we recommend is determining which carrier has the best coverage in your area. While you could simply look at the maps that the wireless companies provide at their retail counters, your best bet will be to ask your friends which carrier they use and how well the service works for them.

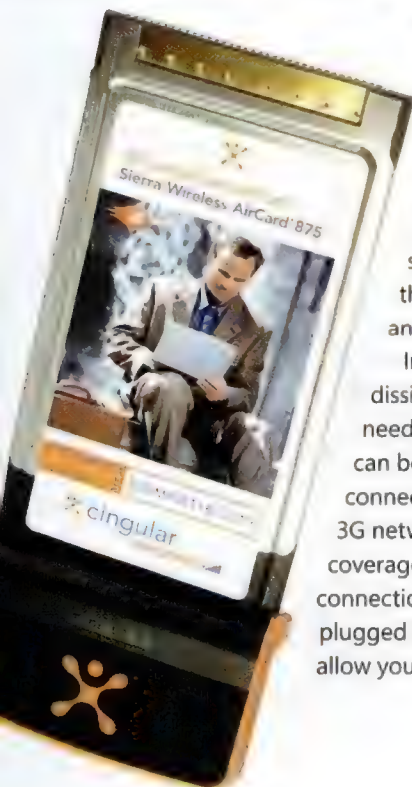
There are several different types of 3G technologies. The two most common types are EV-DO (Evolution-Data Optimized) and EDGE (Enhanced Data rates for GSM Evolution). EV-DO is the faster of the two, with speeds as high as 1.5Mbps in some areas under the best conditions. Both Verizon and Sprint offer EV-DO, whereas Cingular uses EDGE. As if to make us all learn a new alphabet, the EV-DO network also comes in two flavors: Rev 0 is the original specification and provides good download speeds but incredibly poor upload speeds, while the newer Rev A provides both a healthy upload and download speed.

In the end, Wi-Fi and 3G networks are not so dissimilar. For anyone who is late for a meeting and needs to check their online schedule in Google, they can both be a life saver. Windows Vista manages both connections easily, alerting you when a wireless or 3G network is available, and when you are out of the coverage area. Either a wWAN (3G) or a wireless (Wi-Fi) connection will help you get connected when you are not plugged into an Internet connection with a cable, and allow you to get much more mobile with a PC.



WiMAX to the RESCUE

In the near future, a third type of wireless data connection, known as WiMAX, will offer Internet access over large metropolitan areas with even faster speeds than 3G or Wi-Fi. For the most part, Wi-Fi and 3G networks are already covering large areas at fast speeds. However, there are still pockets of poor coverage, even in trendy urban locales like downtown San Francisco. WiMAX is a broadband wireless technology that will blanket an area with high-speed access at relatively low cost. A WiMAX signal will cover a 70 mile area with connection speeds up to 70Mbps. That's a whole lot faster than today's home broadband connections. There are actually two different flavors of WiMAX. Intel is leading the charge with a mobile version (codenamed "Montevina") that will be built into laptops. It will be introduced in 2008. Another version of WiMAX will link wireless hotspots together for widespread coverage. With that version, you will likely connect using the Wi-Fi adapter in current laptops. Either way, the most critical difference between WiMAX and Wi-Fi is the signal. WiMAX will use a wider spectrum of channels and could become common in rural areas as a kind of fifth utility (in addition to water, power, gas, and the phone line), since these areas often can't get good wired broadband service.



HOME

showcase >

tv + movies

music + radio



Hollywood is all about romance, enticing audiences with images of impossible beauty and allure. But things get a lot less romantic when a movie hits DVD, with consumers trudging to the video store to rent a title, only to be charged extra for a late return (or, worse, waiting days for the movie to arrive by mail).

With a broadband connection and your Windows Vista PC, you can shop from many movie download stores, renting and buying titles without leaving home. And the days of worrying about rental returns are over!

If you'd rather buy than rent, you still can. You can save purchased films forever on your hard drive, and many stores offer easy ways to move the files to portable players.

So which movie download site should you use? We've tested the eight best services out there, and you've got the verdicts right here. Whether you want to get the most out of online movies right now, or are just getting set for the future of home entertainment, we've got you covered. Butter up some popcorn, turn the page, and let the cinematic action begin.

The background of the entire page is a dark theater stage. A pair of red curtains is pulled back on the right side, revealing a stage floor. In the background, several logos are visible: 'KEIN' on the left, 'Jazz Radio and M' on the right, 'REUTERS' in the center, 'YAHOO! SPORTS' on the left, and '((XM)) ARE YOU ON?' on the right.

THEATER *without* DVDs

Are online movie downloads really better than DVDs? We've tested the top eight services on the Net, and our results will shock you!

By Zack Stern



HOME THEATER *without* DVDs

Amazon Unbox

A huge catalog, great quality, and lots of playback options earn our pick



The exclamation point icon means Tom Cruise will self destruct soon; this flick is a time-limited rental.



Amazon Unbox

Movie Rentals: \$4

Movie Purchases: \$10-15

TV Show Purchases: \$2

www.amazon.com



Pros: Wide catalog, intuitive interface, many media players supported, TiVo support, Media Center Extender support.

Cons: Missing Disney titles, rentals don't work with portable media players.

Amazon was one of the originators of customer reviews and automatically generated recommendations, and we like how the company has applied those features to the Unbox video store. Just like the rest of Amazon, videos are rated by others, and the store is always ready to suggest your next purchase. Beyond that editorial content, the site delivers problem-free downloads, a wide selection of popular flicks, and the great support for many portable media players (for purchased movies only).

We installed the Unbox software without any issues and began buying movies right away, selecting from the catalog of thousands of options. Almost all of the major studios and networks are represented—including Fox, MGM, Paramount, Sony, Universal, and Warner Bros.—with the exception of Disney. We were disappointed by the omission of titles like *Cars* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*, but at least a press time, no other download store offers the same diversity of studio choices, and none match the selection of Netflix or Blockbuster. We still found plenty to keep us busy, renting and buying a handful of recent movies and even obscure TV shows. (Oh, *The State*, how we missed you.)

The Unbox application handles downloading the movie files for you, which took about an hour for a two-hour movie on our high-speed Internet connection. But unlike some other stores,

Unbox lets you watch movies several minutes into the download instead of having to wait for them to complete. The download utility also plays movies, but users can opt to watch them in Media Player or Media Center, which is a much nicer experience.

Video quality is great compared to the other services, but we still give DVDs the lead overall; on-screen object edges are often blurred, many movie title sequences—and subtitles—lack definition, and gradual gradations are marred by blocky artifacts. Detail- and action-oriented movies like *X-Men: The Last Stand* and *The Science of Sleep* were clearly a step back from DVD compression quality, especially in full-screen mode on a 24-inch LCD.

Unbox is a strong general choice, but it's especially capable for watching movies away from a PC, supporting many PlaysForSure media players and even a Series2 or later TiVo, for a direct TV connection. Media Extenders, like the Xbox 360, also stream movies.

STEP-BY-STEP

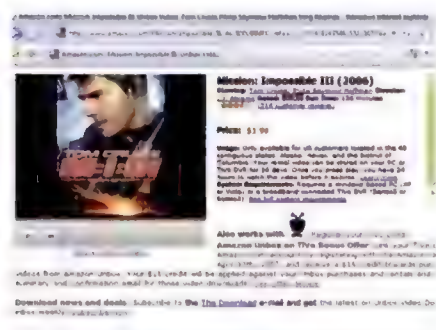
Download Movies from Amazon Unbox



1 Browse and Install

Visit Amazon.com, and click the link in the left column to jump to the Unbox store. Click Download The Unbox Video Player at the top of the window and follow the instructions to install the program. Back on the Amazon Unbox website, browse or search through the options to find something to watch. Rental movies can't be transferred

to a portable media player, last for up to 30 days, and will be automatically deleted 24 hours after first being played. Purchased movies don't expire and work with many media players. (Click the "What is this?" link on the website for a list of supported devices.) All movies can be viewed on a TV with a Media Center Extender such as the Xbox 360, or even a Series2 or later TiVo.



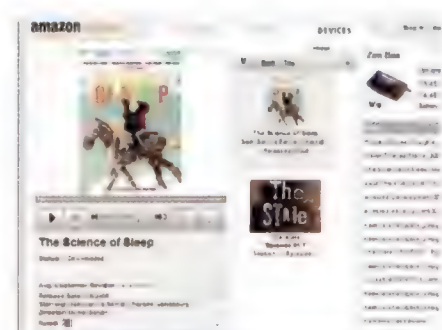
2 Download a Movie

After locating a movie to rent or buy, choose the PC to which to send the download using the drop-down menu. (Unbox can store movies on up to three computers. If you're only using one PC, the menu will already have the correct setting. Don't worry if you choose the wrong machine because all movies can be re-downloaded.) Rent or buy the movie with the 1-Click button, or follow the standard checkout if it's your first Unbox video.



3 Play a Movie

Launch the Amazon Unbox program, and the download should automatically begin. If it doesn't after a minute, click Help > Check for Recent Purchases. The My Videos tab lists the videos available on a PC and also charts the progress of the current download. After a few minutes—depending on the speed of your Internet connection—you can double-click a movie or click Play to begin watching as the download continues.



4 Take it On the Road

The Devices tab shows any media players that are connected to your PC and lists the videos available to sync. Drag purchases to the media player to transfer them and take them on the road. If you're currently downloading a video, wait until it's complete before attempting the transfer—otherwise you'll just transfer a damaged and unusable file.



HOME THEATER *without* DVDs

Apple iTunes

The only store that puts movies on your iPod



Apple iTunes

Movie Purchases: \$10-15

TV Show Purchases: \$2

www.apple.com



Pros: iPod support, strong TV catalog, Disney titles.

Cons: No other portable media players or Extenders supported

After music downloads, iTunes first launched TV content. It still includes a variety of those shows.

FUN FACT

2% of U.S. households with Internet access downloaded a video from an online store in the third quarter of 2006, according to an NPD Group study. 90% of those purchases were made through iTunes.

At press time, Apple had just released a new version of iTunes with support for Windows Vista. And not a moment too soon. The previous version gave us endless headaches on our Windows Vista PC, with buggy downloads and all kinds of playback problems. But the new version works smoothly and easily, making the iPod movie experience a positive one for Windows Vista users.

The store has a decent selection of TV shows—about 350—and more than 500 movies, including Disney titles that haven't made it to some competitors. iTunes is the only service that supports Apple's iPod, and video quality is good, with resolution up to 640 x 480.

We bought a few movies, including *Cars*, from the iTunes store. Apple doesn't offer any rental options; movies cost about \$10-15, while TV shows are about \$2 each (with a reduced price available if you buy a full season). Shows

can play while being downloaded, so you can watch right away rather than wait around fantasizing about how great your download will eventually be. While the TV show catalog is fairly diverse, movies are heavily weighted towards Disney studios. This preference is great to balance other download services that lack any Disney titles, but it's not wide enough to satisfy a movie buff's cinematic needs.

After downloading, we moved files over to an iPod without incident and could watch them on that device's small screen. The video quality looked good, easily beating comparable portable files on other devices from other stores. But because this is an Apple product, portable playback is iPod-only; videos can't be played in Windows Media Player; and don't bother trying a Media Extender to watch videos on a TV. (Instead, Apple offers its own TV connection with the \$299 Apple TV.)

Jaman

Unique indie pictures with a buggy interface

Jaman

Movie Rentals: \$2

Movie Purchases: \$5

www.jaman.com



Pros: Independent and foreign movies that aren't available elsewhere, community features, 7-day playback for rentals.

Cons: Reliance on QuickTime causes headaches in Vista, no mainstream titles.



The self-contained program browses movies from film festivals, international films, and other content that doesn't see wide release.

With the big studios controlling who gets to sell popular movies, Jaman decided to court another niche, offering independent, festival, and international movies alongside social networking features. The service was still in self-described "beta" mode when we tried it, offering several free rentals to new users, and charging about \$5 to buy movies. Jaman will appeal most to users who want to take risks with movies, but it won't satisfy people who are looking for widely marketed blockbusters; we found some interesting documentaries, shorts, and international productions, but we hadn't heard of many of the 350 features and shorts at press time.

We used Jaman's download-and-playback tool to browse and rent titles. Unlike other services, rental titles can be watched as often as users want for a week; we strongly prefer this approach over the *Mission Impossible*-style, 24-hours after playback, self-destructing rentals that only serve to punish you for falling asleep on the couch. Jaman, however, wants to manage a user's video library, even beyond its own downloads. We think this overreaching approach is too intrusive, and we'd rather have the option to play Jaman videos in Windows Media Player. Jaman also misses the connection with Media Center Extenders and portable media players. The only way to watch movies is in front of a PC.

Aside from its indie catalog, community features differentiate Jaman from other services. Users can create social networking profiles, communicate with other users, and get recommendations directly from peers. You can also upload your own shorts and feature films (providing, of course, that you've made some), with Jaman saying that there will eventually be an option to set a price and make money from your work.

Jaman relies on QuickTime to play its movies, and like the iTunes store, it gave us problems on some of our test PCs. The Jaman media manager even crashed a few times, leaving us generally unimpressed with the overall experience, even though we like many of the service's features. Windows Vista users should first test Jaman's free content to make sure it runs well before spending money on the service.





Wal-Mart Video Downloads

Resource hungry-app delivers wide catalog

Wal-Mart Video Downloads

Movie Purchases: About \$10-15

TV Show Purchases: About \$2

**www.mediadownloads.
walmart.com**



Pros: Wide catalog and studio support, strong media player support, good quality files.

Cons: Resource hog, can't watch while downloading, can't watch videos in WMP



Wal-Mart's 3,000-title catalog includes a heavy sampling of popular, mainstream favorites.

Wal-Mart offers about 3,000 TV shows and movies in its large catalog, with selections from all major studios including Disney. Because of this wide catalog and good video quality, Wal-Mart is easy to recommend for many users. However, the service feels intrusive, using more PC resources than any competitor, and causing many Windows Vista security alerts.

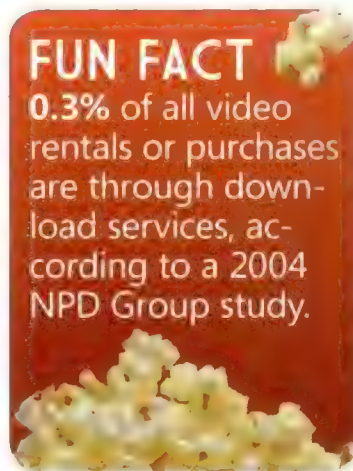
We installed the Wal-Mart software and bought a few movies off the company website. The process works fairly well, with us choosing to download both a higher-quality, PC video format and lower-quality version for portable media players. Users can't watch the videos while downloading, but once complete, they only play within the Walmart application. That means that unlike some other services, Windows Media Player is off-limits.

On-screen videos look good. Our picky eyes still prefer DVDs—Wal-Mart videos have minor edge blurring and other compression artifacts—but the quality is among the best of the download services. We wish media player versions of movies had a higher resolution, but those seem have a slight edge over the Amazon Unbox portable files.

At press time, Wal-Mart was buggy and a system resource hog. While the service says it's in beta, we paid money for movies and expect them to work. A few minor error messages occur every single time we play a file. But beyond those glitches, the Wal-Mart program opens itself at startup and trips the Windows Vista security alert each time. Worse, its background process sometimes take a ridiculous 100MB RAM even when the program isn't open or downloading.

Wal-Mart's video quality and catalog may offset its greedy use of computer resources and minor bugs, but we hope that software updates fix both of those problems to make it a clear leader.

FUN FACT
0.3% of all video rentals or purchases are through download services, according to a 2004 NPD Group study.



Vongo

Subscription catalog is good for compulsive downloaders



Vongo

Monthly fee: \$10

Premium Rentals: \$3-4

www.vongo.com



Pros: Many subscription choices, selectable format and feature options, works well within Media Center.

Cons: Many recent movies cost extra, limited portable media player support, complete catalog smaller than other services.



The glossy interface looks good in its own application, and it also works within Windows Media Center.

Vongo is offered by the Starz cable channel, and the service even lets users stream that TV content live to PCs. Like cable TV, Vongo relies on a subscription method, where users pay \$10 each month for virtually unlimited downloads. Yes, there's a catch; some movies—often the newest to the catalog—are only offered for an extra pay-per-view-style rental fee. The catalog also gradually changes, where movies are only offered until a certain date, at which point they're unavailable to watch. We don't like this artificial structure—there's no technical reason the catalog needs to be trimmed—but Vongo's quality and package service are appealing.

Vongo is well integrated with our other Windows Vista applications, offering its access through a stand-alone utility, directly through Windows Media Center, or on an Extender device. The service fits right into this media jukebox, with navigation that mirrors the rest of the program. Users can watch previews and begin downloads either in Media Center or the stand-alone player.

Vongo gives some choices in file downloads, including "stan-

dard" or "director's cut" versions, widescreen formats, alternate subtitles, or other variables depending on the specific movie. We like these options, but most of the movies we've tried give only one choice—the screen format—if any.

Movie quality is among the top of these services, with good contrast and details. However, compared to a DVD, edges look slightly blurred; and patches of color that should be smooth are often slightly blocky, showing the compression. Vongo approaches DVD quality, but it doesn't quite match that format's look.

Vongo uses checkboxes to toggle navigation between the all-inclusive, subscription movies and the extra-cost, pay-per-view titles. We like this approach, but we still wish the service included everything at the subscription rate, even a few dollars more. The subscription setup also seems like a great match for media players and commuters, but few devices are supported. At press time, only the Toshiba Gigabeat could play Vongo downloads. Regardless, Vongo is a good option if the subscription model appeals to you, especially if you have that portable media player.



HOME THEATER *without* DVDs

Movielink

A great place to hunt for online movie bargains



Movielink

Movie Rentals: \$4-5

Movie Purchases: \$10-20

TV Show Rentals: \$4-5

TV Show Purchases: \$2

www.movielink.com



Pros: Bargains can be had, wide catalog and studio support, supports many portable media players.

Cons: Some prices are higher than other stores, weak TV catalog, frequent security warnings.

Our high-speed connection downloads a two-hour movie in about an hour. Once we begin this rental, we'll have 24 hours to finish watching.

Movielink sells items on a rental and purchase basis, and its most distinguishing factor is its fluctuating item prices. While browsing the service, users will stumble into sections that offer temporary sales, discounting rentals that are often about \$5 to as low as \$1. We can't help feeling like we're getting a bargain. Beyond that thrifty angle, content is strong and weighted heavily to movies; TV shows are mostly a mixture of selected mainstream hits like *Friends* and random classics like *Gumby* and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.

At press time, the Movielink catalog included the mainstream studios of other stores like Unbox:

Fox, MGM, Paramount, Sony,
Universal, Warner Bros.,
and others. Additionally, some

titles from Disney studios, such as *Cars*, were available, but only as rental items, not as purchases. We hope to see the catalog expand to include Disney in the purchasing lineup.

We installed and ran Movielink without any major issues, however, the program requires a lot of attention in its setup and use, as Windows Vista frequently gives security warnings. They subside after a while but never completely go away.

Overlooking that nuisance, video quality is fairly good, although compression artifacts regularly occur; we rank Movielink quality in the middle of the download pack. Movies can be watched in the Movielink application, or they can even be played in Windows Media Player, unlike many of the other stores. Purchased movies work on many portable media players and Media Center Extenders, but we were disappointed that rentals didn't work with either method.

Movielink's often-discounted movies are a good place for newcomers to test the waters of the movie download market. The service still has room to improve its image quality and support for watching rental files away from a PC, but it represents a solid baseline of performance, selection, and price.



BitTorrent

Feels like paying twice for each movie

BitTorrent

Movie Rentals: \$3-4

Movie Purchases: \$10-15

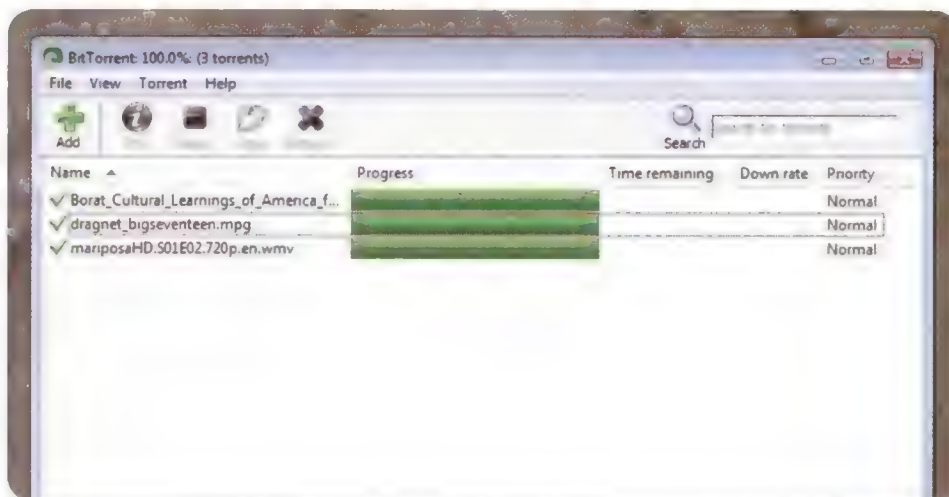
TV Show Purchases: \$2

www.bottorrent.com



Pros: Some files are higher quality than at other stores.

Cons: Mediocre selection, viewing experience varies with different files, no way to watch movies away from a PC.



The BitTorrent application is made to download and upload files to other users. These finished downloads play back in Windows Media Player.

BitTorrent is a peer-to-peer service that was never expressly designed for illegal movie downloads, but that's how it earned its reputation. Instead of using a central server to download movies—or any file—from one location, BitTorrent relies on peer-to-peer connections to download small parts of files from large numbers of computers. And as others download files, they also become hosts, sharing pieces with new downloaders. The result is that this decentralized method of moving files works great if lots of people download and host the same file.

BitTorrent made nice with Hollywood and now sells the files users had distributed for free. The service still works largely in its original configuration, and unfortunately, it doesn't transfer well to a commercial download service. The company offers movies, TV shows, and even music and games, but our experience varied wildly with the content we bought.

Although, we got *Borat* in about an hour, some downloads of less popular files took us a day or more. We're not only disappointed by that pace but also BitTorrent's reliance on its users to host these files; the company is asking us to share the load on its servers, and because we're paying money, we don't see why we should bother. (Unrelated to these paid files, BitTorrent is still used for free, public file transfers; in those cases, we're happy to support other users.)

BitTorrent is comprised of its download (and sharing) application and its website. The application facilitates file transfers but doesn't support playback. We don't think that omission is a big deal—we'd rather watch movies in Media Player or our other standard applications—but we wish that completed downloads

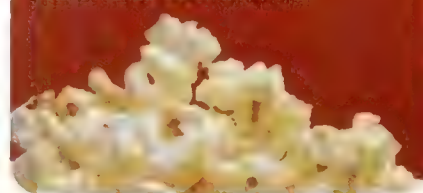
automatically joined our library. As-is, the BitTorrent application is just a file transfer utility and requires more steps than most users should have to deal with.

The movies look good, although the quality varies widely, from individual-created content to options its several movie and TV studios (including Fox, Viacom, Paramount, MGM, and Warner Bros.). A handful videos are even available in HD formats; we hope that those high-quality options grow.

If BitTorrent offered bargain-priced downloads and ways to watch files away from a PC—there's no media player or Extender support—we'd be happier with its inconsistent transfer speeds and request for users' computers to shoulder basic service functionality. But for now, BitTorrent feels like an attempt to shoehorn a paid service into an established, free-download utility.

FUN FACT

About 40% of all Internet traffic is BitTorrent file sharing according to studies by CacheLogic and other companies. Much of this—although BitTorrent declined to specify—includes free or illegal file sharing unrelated to paid BitTorrent downloads.

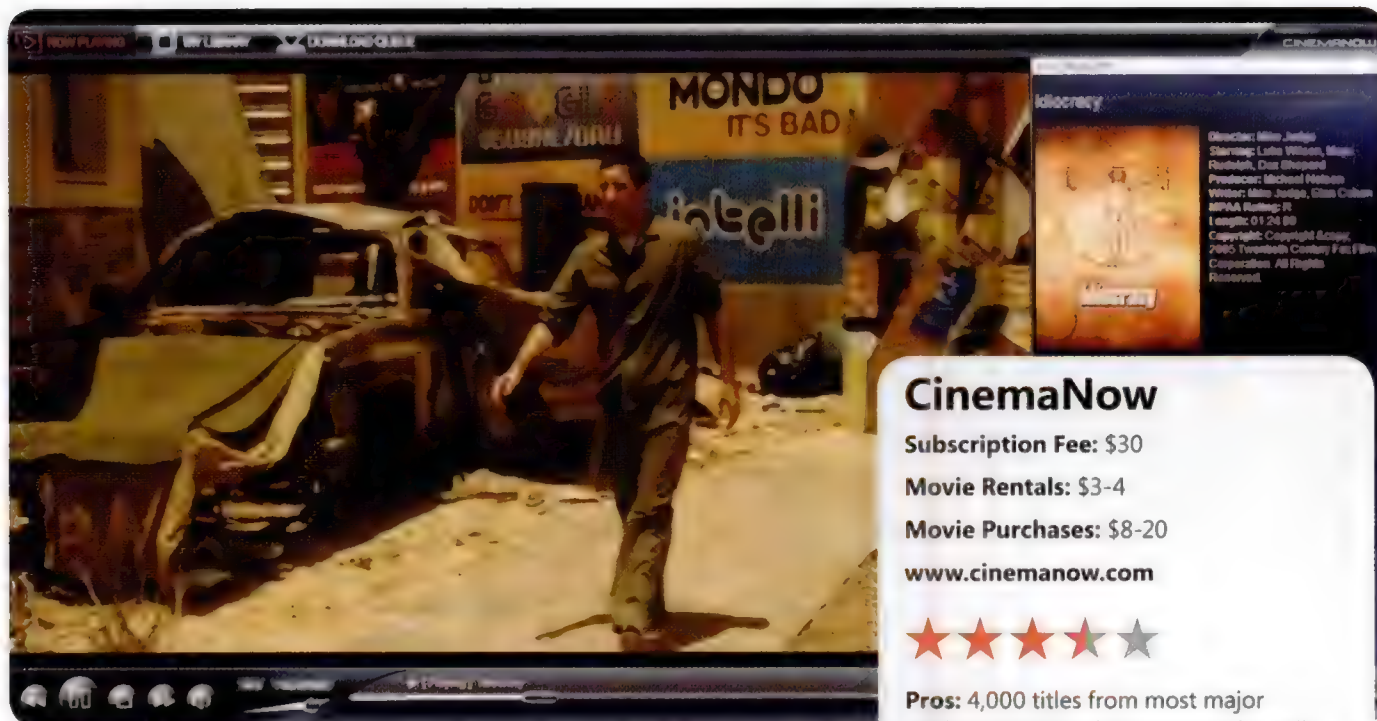




HOME THEATER *without* DVDs

CinemaNow

A massive catalog with limited playing options



CinemaNow's media management software runs well in Windows Vista, but lacks the option to share with most portable media players or any Media Center Extenders.

Boasting a massive library of hit movies and TV shows, CinemaNow is one of the easiest movie download sites to get started with in Windows Vista. But its limited support for portable players makes it a tough sell for anyone wanting entertainment on the go. You see, while CinemaNow's enormous catalog is available for download directly to the Archos 604, 605, and 704 portable video players over a Wi-Fi connection (and via cable connection to the Archos 404 and 504), you can't simply drag them onto any other Windows Media Player-compatible device the way you'd hope to. The company claims this is because other players don't meet its high quality standards, but we're not buying it. And without broad portable support, this otherwise incredible movie site is going to disappoint a lot of users.

Signing up for CinemaNow takes less than a minute (got a name and an e-mail address?) and the custom media manager downloads and installs quickly. From the time we typed in the URL to the time we started our first download, about two minutes had elapsed. Less than half an hour later, we were watching *Idiocracy* in beautiful full-screen clarity. If you do happen to have a wireless Archos player, you can use the icon on your device to browse to the site, choose a portable version of whichever movie you like, and start your download. It really is a terrific experience,

CinemaNow

Subscription Fee: \$30

Movie Rentals: \$3-4

Movie Purchases: \$8-20

www.cinemanow.com



Pros: 4,000 titles from most major studios, intuitive player app works well in Windows Vista, download directly to Archos wireless media player (pictured on our cover), Burn movies to DVD.

Cons: High prices match those of on-demand cable services, a mere 119 titles can be burned to DVD, very limited portable support.

and there's nothing like downloading a new movie to watch on the train ride home while you're still sitting at your desk.

An unusual feature of CinemaNow is its mature content, which sets it apart from other mainstream movie sites. The AllAdult Channel is linked from the CinemaNow home page, but does include parental controls in the form of sub-accounts that you set up for your kids, which then let you control which ratings you'll allow them to download.

More enticing to general audiences is CinemaNow's Burn to DVD content, which lets you download complete DVDs, including menus and special features, that you can watch on your PC, burn to DVD, and play in your living room. At press time, only 119 titles were available for this feature (due to licensing issues), and we didn't see many hot titles in that catalog. But if you do happen to spot something you like in there, it's a great way to grab a complete DVD for as little as \$9.

The Old Way: DVD rental

Is it time to throw away DVDs and jump into a download-only video future? Not quite yet, as it turns out. We tried two subscription DVD rental services—Blockbuster and Netflix—to get some perspective in comparison to the download market.

Netflix began its DVD-by-mail business in 1998. Users pay a monthly subscription depending on the number of videos they want at a single time—we tried three concurrent DVDs for \$18 per month—and get a new DVD sent from them after mailing one back. Blockbuster takes a similar approach (with the same price for three concurrent DVDs) and also lets users exchange the movies at stores instead of dropping them in the mail. Both services offer comprehensive ratings and recommendations, where the companies point you to movies you may like after learning more about your tastes.

Neither company offers movie downloads, although at press time Netflix had just rolled out a service that streams some movies to your PC from its website. Instead, the trade-off of physically handling DVDs comes with major quality benefits. Most of the movie download services compress a two-hour show into about 1-2GB of drive space. DVDs, however, can spread a two-hour movie into about 8GB of space, resulting in sharper details and smoother textures. DVDs also support more surround-sound audio formats and other enhancements that are uncommon with downloaded titles.

We like the convenience of movie downloads, but none of those stores can quite match or beat DVD-quality. Some are close, and we hope that HD video downloads become common and leapfrog DVD-quality, but DVDs still offer a clearer picture than all of those services.

FUN FACT

\$300,000,000 is spent annually on postage by Netflix.



Free Stuff

FUN FACT

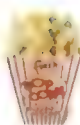
1902 was the year *Le Voyage dans la Lune* was released, regarded among the first narrative films. Get it at www.archive.org, a site that specializes in free distribution of public-domain movies.

Many movies and TV shows are available for free without having to sign up for any service. Go straight to the source at the TV networks or grab public domain movies instead.

Network sites: NBC, ABC, CBS, Fox, and The CW all offer free episodes of selected current and upcoming TV shows directly at their websites. Many cable sites, like Comedy Central, Cartoon Network, and MTV also offer complete shows or selected clips. If you missed a recent show or you don't even have a TV, look here first for popular program. You may even find recent episodes that otherwise cost money through the video download stores.

Archive.org: This curator of public domain media files offers more than 60,000 free videos. More than 2,000 film transfers from the black-and-white days—the Prelinger Archives section of the site—include public service classics like *Duck and Cover*, old TV commercials, and even cinema pillars like *Le Voyage Dans La Lune*. Other sections of the site include user-uploaded content, like animations and video blogs.





HOME THEATER *without* DVDs

How They Rate

Movie Download Services At-a-Glance



	Cost*	Catalog Size	Resolution	Support away from PC	Requires movies to be played in its own application	Star Rating
Amazon Unbox	\$4 rentals, \$10-15 purchases, \$2 TV shows	"Thousands of movies" and "thousands of TV shows"	720x480, 640x480	TiVo, Media Center Extender, many portable media players	No	★★★★★
iTunes	\$10-15 movies, \$2 TV shows	350 TV shows, 500 movies	640x480	Apple TV, iPod	Yes	★★★★★
Jaman	About \$2 rentals, About \$5 purchases	250 features and 100 shorts	Up to 720x480	None	Yes	★★★★★
Walmart	\$10-15 purchases, \$2 TV shows	3,000 total movies and TV shows	640x480	Many portable media players, selected Media Center Extenders	Yes	★★★★★
Vongo	\$9.99 montly fee, \$3-4 for premium movies	1,000 movies, 1,500 other programs (concerts, sports)	720x480	Toshiba Gigabeat media player	No	★★★★★
Movielink	\$4-5 rentals, \$10-20 purchases	1,300 total TV shows and movies	Up to 720x480	Media Center Extenders	No	★★★★★
BitTorrent	\$3-4 rentals, \$10-15 purchases, \$2 TV shows	2,500 movies, 2,500 TV shows	Most 720x480, plus limited HD content	Selected Media Center Extenders	No	★★★★★
CinemaNow	\$4 rentals, purchases \$10-20, TV shows \$2	4,000 movie and TV titles	Up to 720x480	Archos portable players, limited Burn to DVD support	Yes	★★★★★

*All prices approximate

SPONSORED SECTION

READY FOR LIFE

Who knew it
was so **EASY?**



create

UNIQUE PROJECTS
FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

organize

SIMPLE IDEAS TO
MAKE EVERYTHING EASIER

connect

SMART WAYS TO
EXPLORE YOUR WORLD

create

Express your passion
with fun, creative projects



PRINT YOUR OWN TEMPORARY TATTOOS



Get your kids
express themselves
in style with temporary tattoos printed right
in your child's room. Let local the creation
with removable tattoo paper. Choose a fun
design from Windows Photo Gallery and print!

CREATE YOUR OWN DVD

Cherish and share your favorite memories with a DVD
that you can play on your TV. Windows DVD Maker—in-
cluded in Windows Vista® Home Premium—makes
it easy to choose your favorite photos and videos,
add backgrounds, and set it all to music.

BE A BRILLIANT HOME CHEF Great cooking starts with fresh ingredients. From fine meats and dairy to delicious fruits and veggies, sites like LocalHarvest.org let you choose from thousands of farm-fresh ingredients grown right in your area and shipped directly from the growers.



DISPLAY YOUR MEMORIES

You don't have to settle for just one picture in your favorite frame. With a digital picture frame like an iMate Momento, you can turn your photo collection into an inspiring slide show of all your best memories.

CREATE THE PERFECT FLORAL

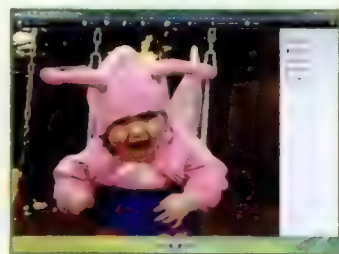
CENTERPIECE Stage beautiful dinners with your own floral arrangements. To get smart ideas for decorating, cooking, and other creative crafts, visit MSN® Lifestyle at lifestyle.msn.com.

CREATE A UNIQUE PHOTOBOOK IN 4 EASY STEPS

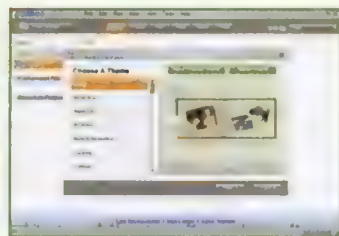
1 SNAP Capture your memories with your digital camera and transfer them to your PC.



2 CHOOSE Select and enhance your pictures in Windows® Photo Gallery.



3 DESIGN Use photobook tools such as Picaboo.com to create custom books.



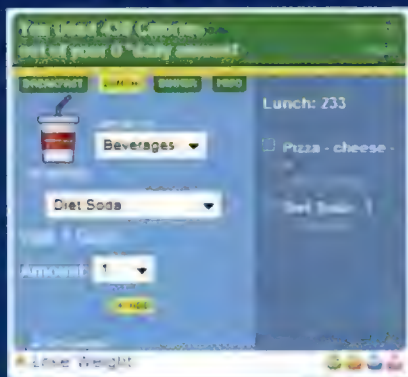
4 ORDER Your personalized book will arrive within days.



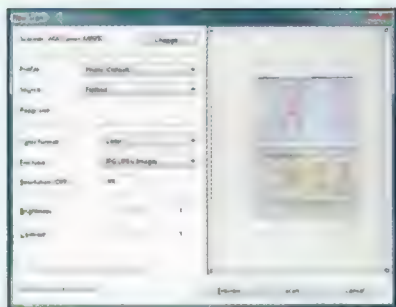
organize

Simplify your life with these easy tips

USE WINDOWS LIVE SPACES TO ORGANIZE YOUR LIFE



It's easy to customize your Windows Live Spaces home page with simple tools to help you organize your life. Calorie counters, to-do lists, calendars, and more can be right at your fingertips every time you log on.



PROTECT IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Planning a trip? Remember to scan your important documents such as your passport and driver's license, and host them on a password protected site like Mozy.com. In an emergency, you can access them from any Internet connection.

ORGANIZE YOUR PHOTOS

If you have a massive photo collection, here's how to get it organized. Use Windows Photo Gallery in Windows Vista to sort all your images, add helpful tags, and rate your favorites so they're easy to find.

WORK OUT WITH THE WEB You don't need a personal trainer to manage a successful fitness program. Online fitness logs such as FitDay.com are a great way to set goals, track your progress, and get great workout advice.

HAVE AN ONLINE GARAGE SALE

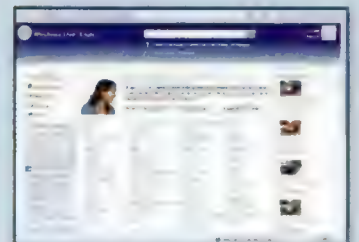
I GATHER Clear all that clutter out of your closets and choose some things to sell.



2 SNAP Take pictures of your belongings and edit them in Windows Photo Gallery.



3 POST Go to expo.live.com and create compelling online ads.



4 COLLECT Get paid through PayPal.com and then ship your stuff away!



DOCUMENT YOUR POSSESSIONS

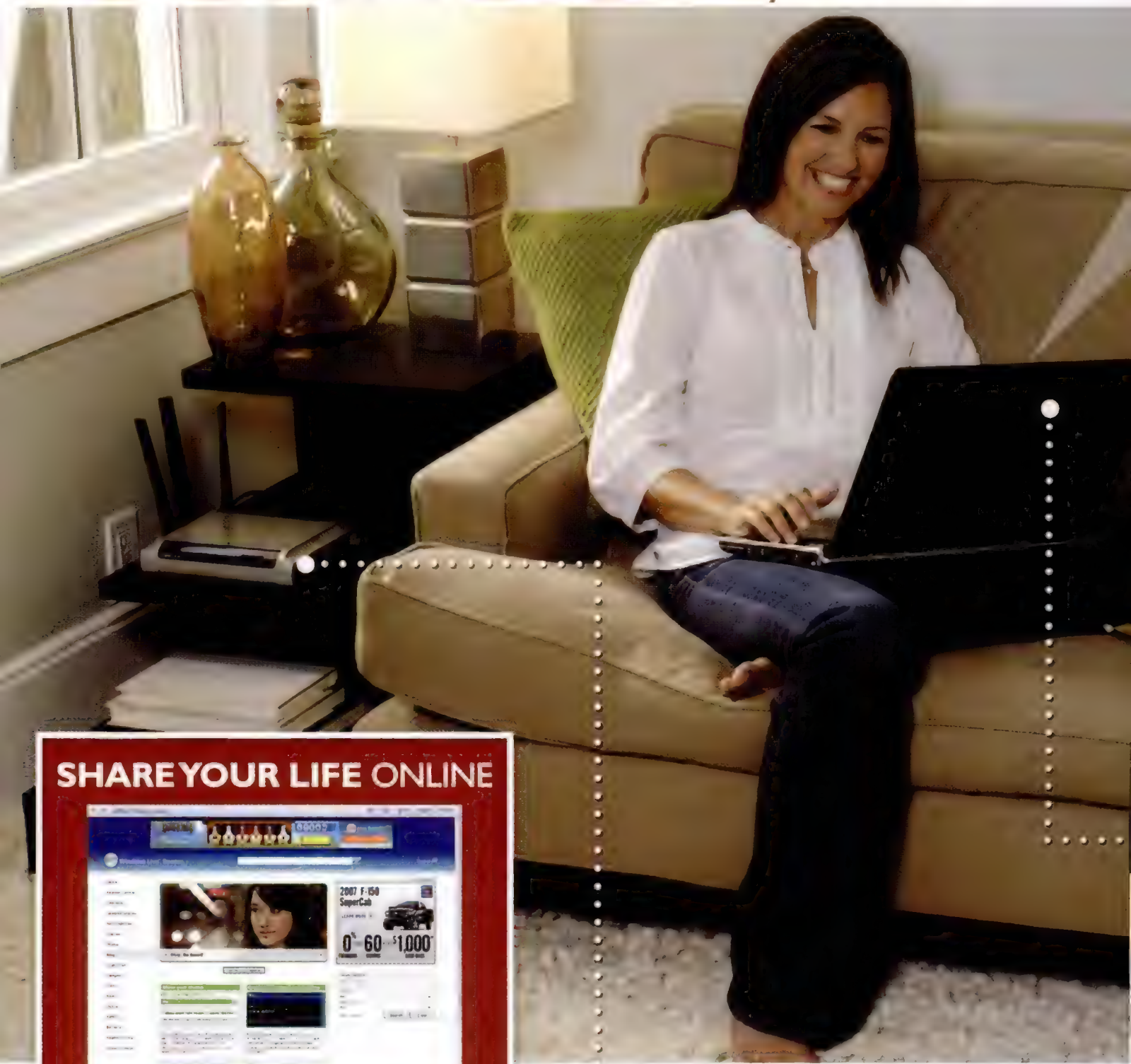
Peace of mind comes easily if you have a digital camera. Take pictures or videos of your most prized possessions and burn them to a DVD. Store the DVD in a safe place, such as a safe deposit box or a family member's home.

DIGITIZE YOUR MUSIC

Turn that rack full of CDs into a searchable collection that you can access anytime. Just pop each disc into your PC and let Windows Media® Player copy it all to your hard drive, complete with album art and song info for every track.

connect

Reach out to the world
on your own terms



SHARE YOUR LIFE ONLINE



Keep your friends and family up to date with your own family blog. With Windows Live Spaces, you can create photo slideshows, share your stories, and link to all your friends.

SURF THE WEB IN COMFORT

Relax with your laptop as you surf the Web wirelessly. A Certified for Windows Vista wireless router takes just minutes to set up and makes your computer more convenient to use.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH GOOD FRIENDS Don't let distance keep you apart from friends and family. Windows Live™ Messenger lets your family see you in person through video chat and a webcam.



GET NEWS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

You don't have to sift through a bunch of websites to get the news you want. Get weather, news, and traffic information right on your PC desktop with Windows Sidebar gadgets from gallery.live.com.

PRINT PHOTOS TO ANYWHERE

Getting beautiful prints of your favorite pictures is now easier than ever. Order prints directly from Walgreens.com using Windows Photo Gallery and you or a friend can pick up prints at any of 5,600 locations.

4 STEPS TO FAMILY-SAFE COMPUTING

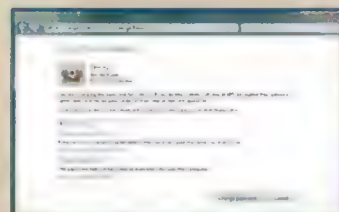
1 GET WINDOWS LIVE ONECARE™

This all-in-one security suite helps protect your PC on the Internet and helps keep your system up to date.



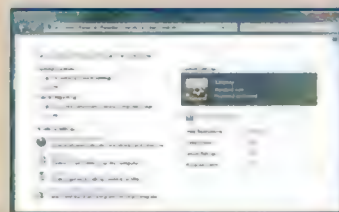
2 ASSIGN PASSWORDS TO EACH USER

Windows Vista makes it simple to create a password-protected account for every member of the family, so you can manage their online experience easily.



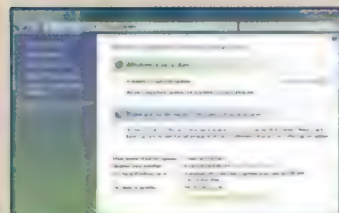
3 USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

Parental Controls in Windows Vista make it easy to choose what your children can do online, and when they can do it.



4. INSTALL UPDATES

Windows Vista will automatically look for new updates for your PC. Be sure to install updates as soon as they're available to take advantage of new security features.



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Get ready for life with these Ready for Life products. Visit www.windowstvsa.com/readyforlife to enter.

- HP Pavilion dv6000 Notebook running Windows Vista Home Premium
- Windows Live OneCare
- Canon MP600 Photo Printer/Scanner
- Canon PowerShot SD750 Camera
- Buffalo Wireless-N Router
- Microsoft Office Home and Student 2007
- 5000 4x6 Photo Prints from walgreens.com
- iMate Memento Photo Frame



NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Open to US residents 18 or older. Be automatically entered by visiting www.windowstvsa.com/readyforlife and subscribing to the "Exploring Windows" newsletter by 11/13/07, ends 11/15/07. Void where prohibited. Full rules available at www.windowstvsa.com/readyforlife.

Only Certified for Windows Vista® software and devices have undergone compatibility tests for ease of use, better performance, and enhanced security on PCs running the Windows Vista operating system. You can be confident that certified products will provide superior experiences with your software, photos, music, videos, and online communications.



Five ways to speed up your PC today

Here's a quintet of simple and cost-effective ways to help your games run faster, your programs launch quicker, and your computer perform better. **By Nick Peers**

1 Install Windows Vista

The SuperFetch technology in Windows Vista lets you load applications and access files much quicker than in previous versions. You take advantage of it every time you use your PC, and it also ensures that performance is consistent throughout the day, whatever your PC is doing. It does this by constantly prioritizing applications over background tasks and maintenance jobs the PC performs automatically. SuperFetch even learns as you use your PC, anticipating which programs you're likely to use and pre-loading them into memory so they start as quickly as possible.

2 Upgrade your memory

Memory is an essential part of your PC – programs including Windows Vista itself are loaded into random access memory (RAM) because it's the quickest way of accessing them. Windows Vista requires a minimum of 512MB of RAM to run, but if you want to enjoy its advanced features, you'll need at least 1GB (1024MB). If your budget will run to it (RAM is currently \$50 to \$75 per 512MB), a memory upgrade is generally

one of the most effective ways of speeding up your computer. The simplest way to pick the right memory for your computer is to visit a memory specialist such as Crucial Technology. Browse to www.crucial.com and use the Crucial Memory Advisor tool, which not only tells you how much memory your PC supports, but also what type of RAM is compatible with your machine.

4 Defrag your hard drive

As you add, edit, and delete files on your hard drive, they tend to get all jumbled up and scattered across the disk. As a result, your PC takes longer to access each file. Windows Vista has a tool called Disk Defragmenter that runs at set times to keep your files in order, making them quicker to access. You can alter this schedule to a more convenient time, or

run the utility manually, by clicking Start > All Programs > Accessories > System Tools > Disk Defragmenter.

5 Trim resource hogs

When you add programs to your PC, many configure themselves to start with Windows Vista. This lengthens the start-up process, and slows down your PC by consuming resources. Some programs, such as your antivirus tool, really do need to begin at start-up, but many don't. To prevent non-essential programs from starting up automatically every time you boot your PC, click Start > All Programs > Windows Defender. Choose Tools, and select Software Explorer from the list to disable or remove selected programs.

3 Use ReadyBoost

If the idea of opening up your PC to fit more memory doesn't appeal, take advantage of a feature in Windows Vista called ReadyBoost.

If you have a USB flash drive (pick up 2GB models for under \$30 from Crucial), you can speed up your PC by inviting Windows Vista to use some or all of the drive to store information it needs to access.

Just plug your flash drive into a spare USB port, and when the Autoplay menu pops up, select 'Speed up my system using Windows ReadyBoost' to enjoy a faster PC.

GET STARTED



Almost everyone is new to Windows Vista, because Windows Vista is still brand new. Here's how to get started with your PC's essential features.

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Back up and restore your e-mail..... 74

Get organized with Windows Calendar 76

Get your old files onto your new PC

It's easy to transfer your documents, photos, and settings to your new Windows Vista PC, but getting your programs working can be a little tricky. Here's how to do it **By James De Vile**



Although buying a new PC is by far the easiest way to get up and running with Windows Vista, it does leave you with the problem of transferring your files and folders over from your old PC. Luckily, this is much simpler than you might expect, thanks to Windows Easy Transfer, which works with the Belkin Easy Transfer Cable for Windows Vista to copy your files from your old PC to your new one. Check out the walkthrough opposite to see how it's done.

Useful though this is, it only works for files and program settings – not for programs themselves, which will have to be reinstalled. Unfortunately, this can be more complicated; programs written for Windows XP may not work or install correctly on Windows Vista, and anything written for even older versions of Windows can be extremely troublesome. We have seen some programs crash, behave oddly, or simply refuse to open at all.

The best way around this is to use Microsoft Compatibility Wizard to fool an application into thinking it's running on a previous version of Windows. You'll find this in Control

Panel – click **Programs > Use an older program with this version of Windows**. (Make sure you have Control Panel set to Control Panel Home, rather than Classic View, by clicking the option on the left side of the window.) Pick out the appl you're having problems with, and choose a compatibility mode. If it worked perfectly in Windows XP, for example, select Windows XP (Service Pack 2). If you're having problems with the title bar or menu buttons not appearing, check **"Disable visual themes"** or **"Disable desktop composition"** to turn off any Aero glass fanciness.

Some older applications, particularly games, will hiccup when they encounter the new security features in Windows Vista, as they can't get at certain system files. You can fix this by checking **"Run this program as an administrator"** in Compatibility Wizard, which gives it the same access as it would have had in Windows XP. If that still doesn't work, go to www.windowsvistamagazine.com and post a question on our message boards; there are plenty of Windows experts ready to help.

Step by Step: How to Transfer your Files to a New PC



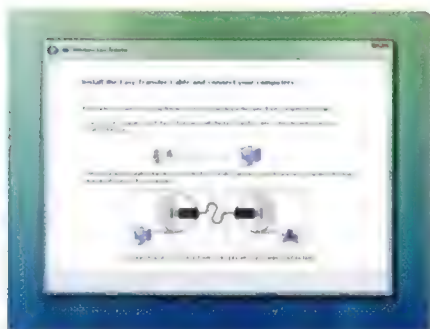
1 GETTING STARTED You need the correct software on your old PC. Insert the CD and follow the prompts to install Windows Easy Transfer Wizard and the Belkin drivers.



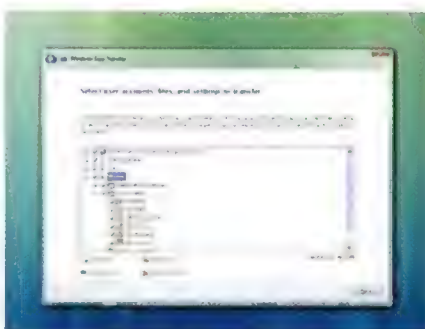
2 PLUG IN Once installed, plug the Belkin Easy Transfer Cable into a USB port on your old computer. It will ask what you want to do – choose “Transfer files and settings.”



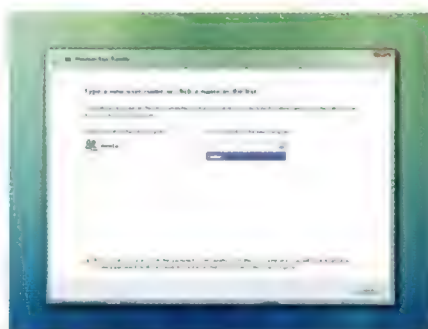
3 LINK THE CABLE Connect the other end of the Easy Transfer Cable into your new Windows Vista PC, and again you should choose to “Transfer files and settings.”



4 WAIT TO CONNECT Windows should automatically detect the connection; wait for the message “A connection to the other computer has been detected.”



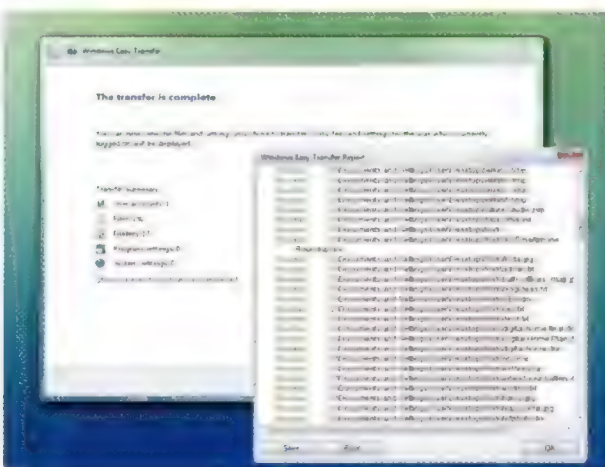
5 CHOOSE YOUR FILES Start a pot of coffee brewing. Clicking **Advanced Options** will enable you to choose whatever files, settings and accounts you need.



6 LINK ACCOUNTS To match up what should go where, link each old account to any new accounts created. You'll need the same number of accounts on both systems.



7 START TO TRANSFER Click **Next** again to begin the transfer. If you really did put some coffee on in step five, go make yourself a cup and kick back; this step should take a while.

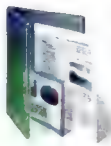


8 GET A LIST Once the transfer is complete, click “Show me everything that was transferred” to get a full list of every file, setting and account copied. Click **Close** to finish.

GET STARTED

Easy Media Sharing

The new features of Windows Vista make it easy not only to set up a home network for sharing music and videos between all your PCs, but also to troubleshoot any network problems quickly **By Will Head**



There's nothing more effective than the topic of networking to make people's eyes glaze over at a cocktail party and get them mentally pacing the number of steps between you and the door.

Thankfully, Windows Vista can free you from the complex, mundane tasks that make you feel like you're working as an unpaid system administrator for your household. It will let you get on with actually enjoying the benefits a home network – like listening to the music stored on your PC upstairs while you're relaxing in the living room with your laptop (see "Set up media sharing in five minutes" below for the full rundown of what you need to do).

The slick new Network and Sharing Center lets you see other computers on your network, and makes it simple to spot any problems that may be blocking your connections.

Great leap forward

Wireless networking may be one of the best technological advances ever made, letting you stay connected on a laptop no matter where you are in the house – the kitchen, the living room or even the bathroom, if you just can't take a break.

Provided your kit isn't more than a couple of years old, then getting set up is remarkably simple. If your laptop has an Intel Centrino badge on it, then you've got everything that you need already built into the

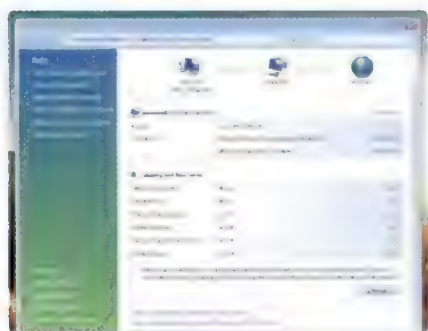
computer. Other laptops also have built-in wireless connectors – the easiest way to check is open the Network and Sharing Center and then click **Manage network connections** from the list on the left-hand side. If you see an entry for a Wireless Network Connection, then you're ready to go.

Finally you'll need a wireless router, which not only enables your computers to connect to one another, but can also help them to share a broadband connection.

Once your router is up and running, Windows Vista will spring into action. Here's how to get started with the great sharing features in Windows Vista's Network and Sharing Center.

Set up media sharing in five minutes

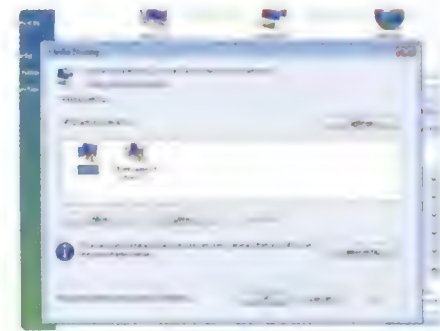
Share your music and videos with everyone in your home



1 GETTING STARTED To enable media sharing on your PC, you first need to fire up the Network and Sharing Center. Locate **Media Sharing** at the bottom of the Sharing and Discovery section, click the **down arrow** on the far right, and then click **Change**.



2 TURN IT ON Your home network should be set to private by default, meaning it's safe to turn on Media Sharing without worrying about unknown network users judging your musical tastes. Check the box next to "Share my media" and then hit **OK**.



3 PICK USERS You can be choosy about who you share your musical delights with – browse through the available computers, pick which you want to permit access to, then click **Allow**. If you later want to remove access, just go back and choose **Deny** instead.

Network map

The simplified network map shows a quick at-a-glance look at how your computer is connected to the Internet, and allows you to easily diagnose problems.

Connection overview

Windows Vista knows whether you're connected to the Internet or just to other machines on your network. You can also see how good your wireless signal is, in case you're having connectivity problems.

Menial tasks

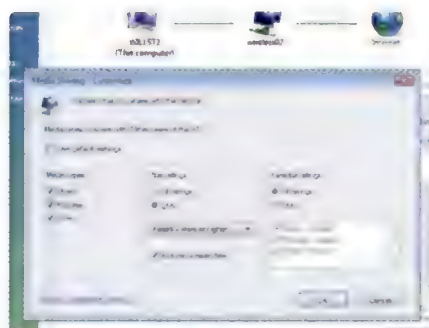
Need to get down to the nitty gritty of why something isn't working? Here you'll find the tools to set up a new connection or repair an existing one.

Sharing and discovery

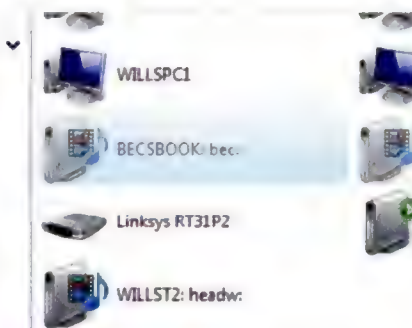
Get quick access to widely used network settings in the Sharing and Discovery area. If you want to set up file sharing, or turn off Network discovery so you can't be seen by others, then you will find the options here.

Care to share?

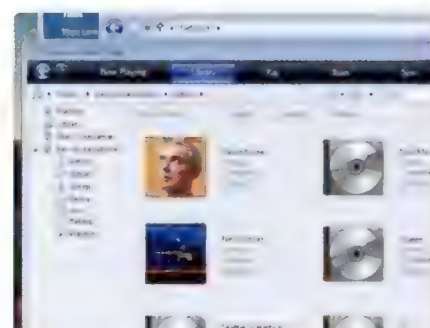
Can't remember exactly which files and folders you're sharing? Use the links here to get a quick list of any you've previously allowed, so you can turn them off again if they're no longer needed.



4 PICK SETTINGS By default you'll be sharing all music, video, and picture files that are unrated, as well as those you've given a rating of more than two stars. For more control, click the Customize button and fine tune the settings.



5 SWITCH OVER Now move over to the other computer you want to listen to music from. Open up Windows Explorer and click on **Network**. Look for the icon with a musical note and film frame next to the machine name and double-click it.

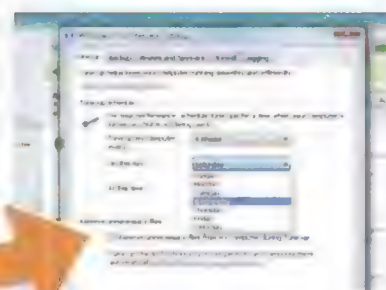


6 PLAY AWAY In Media Player you'll now see the other computer listed in the left-hand pane, below your Library. Click on it, and you can navigate through the media files as if they were stored on your own PC.

GET STARTED

Protect your PC with Windows Live OneCare

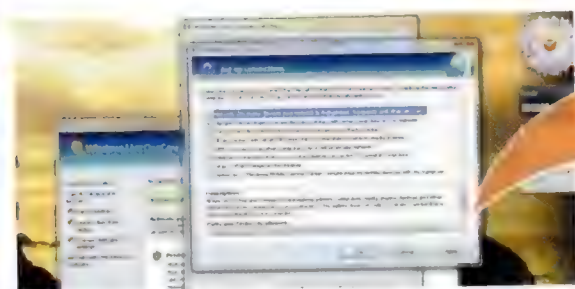
In our last issue, we introduced you to Windows Live OneCare, a new program that combines antivirus, backup, and computer maintenance – and does it all automatically. Here's how it works and how you can use it **By Jon Hicks**



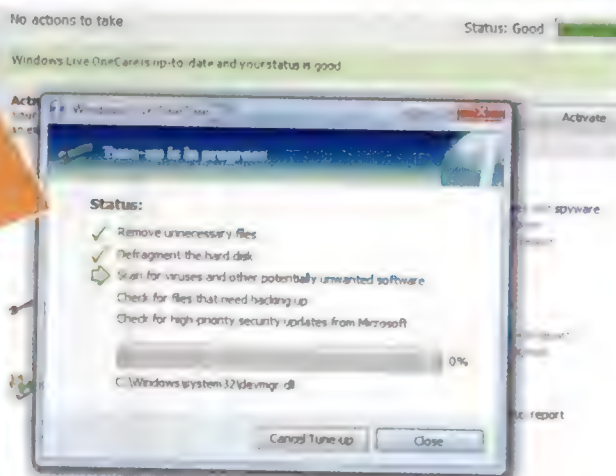
1 DOWNLOAD IT Head to <http://safety.live.com>, click "Download the free trial," follow the links, and then hit **Run** to download and install the 90-day trial. You'll see it adds a new icon at the bottom-right of your screen.

2 YOUR STATUS Double-click the icon for a comprehensive health check. The icon works a little like a traffic light. Green means you're good to go, yellow means take caution and check for instructions (usually to back up your files or run an update), and red means stop everything and fix a problem.

3 KEEPING CLEAN The antivirus scanning updates and runs automatically, but it will also back up your files and tidy up your hard drive. Click **Change OneCare Settings** to set what days and times the tune-up should run.



4 KEEPING QUIET The big advantage of OneCare is that it tries to keep out of your way. It automatically allows known programs to access the internet, and only asks you about ones it doesn't know. To share files on your home network, click **Firewall** and then **Firewall Connection Tool**.



5 GETTING HELP In addition to Web and e-mail support, OneCare includes live phone support. Find the number by clicking the **Get Help...** link. Otherwise, sit back and relax – although don't let your guard down entirely. The biggest threat to system security is usually the user.

Control your PC with Voice Commands



If you haven't tried it yet, discover how you can control your computer just by talking to it. All of the advice in this guide is taken from the book *Windows Vista Plain & Simple*



Windows Vista includes a powerful speech recognition program that makes it possible for you to use your voice to control the computer. Although speech recognition is designed primarily for people who have difficulty using the keyboard and/or the mouse, the ability to direct Windows and your other programs with your voice has a certain authoritarian appeal for some. And, just like using the mouse or the keyboard, there are numerous ways to accomplish any specific task.



Note: You'll need a microphone to use voice commands. We recommend a compact USB headset like the Logitech Premium Notebook Headset. (\$60, www.logitech.com)

Directing with voice commands

Start speech recognition

To begin

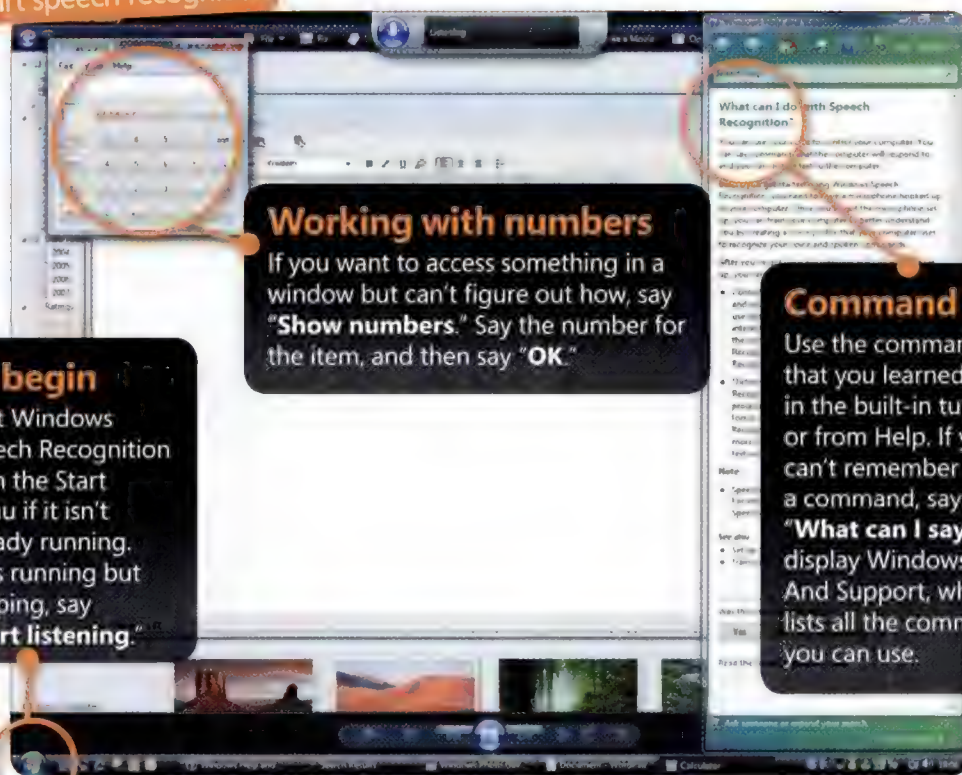
Start Windows Speech Recognition from the Start menu if it isn't already running. If it's running but sleeping, say **"Start listening."**

Working with numbers

If you want to access something in a window but can't figure out how, say **"Show numbers."** Say the number for the item, and then say **"OK."**

Command aid

Use the commands that you learned in the built-in tutorial or from Help. If you can't remember a command, say **"What can I say?"** to display Windows Help And Support, which lists all the commands you can use.



GET STARTED

To do this → Say this

- Start a program → **"Start,"** and then the name of the program.
- Open the Start menu → **"Start."**
- Open a menu in a program or window → *The name of the menu.*
- Activate a toolbar button → *The name of the button.*
- Activate a link → *The name of the link.*
- Click an item → **"Click,"** and then the name of the item.
- Use the equivalent of keystrokes → **"Press,"** and then the name of the key or the name of the keyboard shortcut.
- Switch to a program → **"Switch to,"** and then the name of the program.
- Scroll in a window → **"Scroll down"** or **"Scroll up."**
- Scroll a specific number of lines → **"Scroll,"** and then the number of lines.
- Move the speech-recognition program out of the way → **"Move speech recognition."**
- Work without using speech recognition → **"Stop listening."**

Caution!

Don't skip the tutorial!

As you work your way through it, the speech recognition program is learning to understand your voice and the way you pronounce words. If you skip the tutorial, the speech-recognition program won't be very effective.

Tip!

You must go through a full set-up process prior to using the speech recognition program for the first time including setting up your microphone and stepping through a tutorial that teaches you the basics of using speech recognition.

Talking to the mouse

Working in finer detail

In the smaller grid, do any of the following:

- Say **"Click"** to click in the middle of the grid.
- Say a number on the grid to show a detailed grid of that region.
- Say a number and then say **"Click"** to click in the centre of that region.
- Say **"Back"** to move back to the larger grid.
- Say **"Cancel"** to remove the mouse grid.
- Say a number and then say **"Right-click"** to right-click in that region.

Get the grid

With speech recognition running and listening, say **"Mouse grid"** to display the large grid.

Move closer

Say the number that identifies the region you want to work in, to display a small grid for that region.

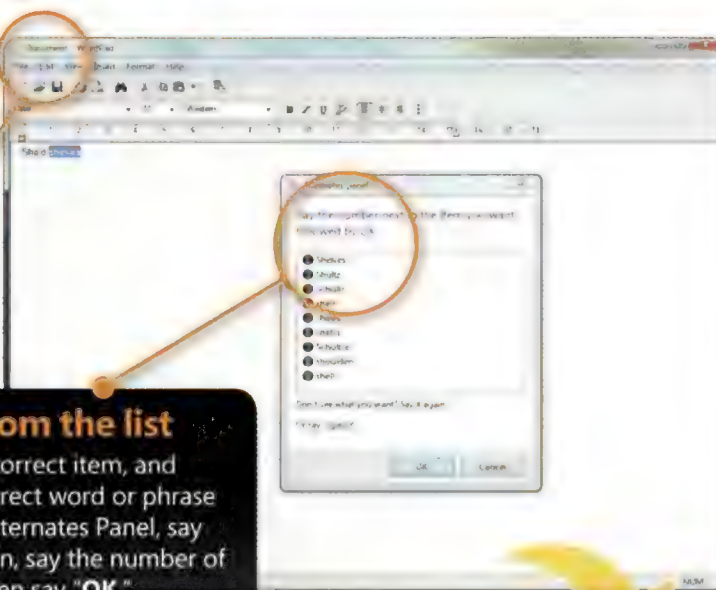
Tip!

Most voice commands, except those used with the mouse grid, aren't recognized while the mouse grid is displayed. The mouse grid will remain on the screen if you type any information, but it will go away if you click the mouse, press the Windows key, or say an appropriate voice command.

Correcting errors

Identify the mistake...

Say **"Correct"** and then the word or phrase that needs to be corrected to display the Alternates Panel.

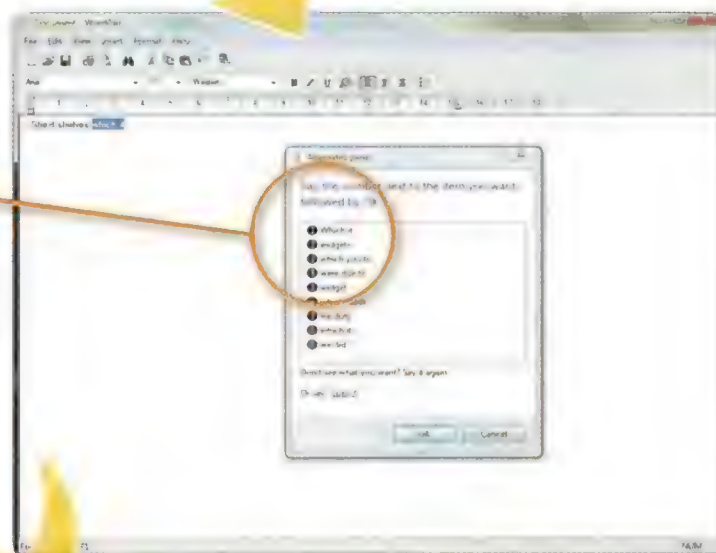


...and choose from the list

Say the number of the correct item, and then say "OK." If the correct word or phrase doesn't appear in the Alternates Panel, say the word or phrase again, say the number of the correct item, and then say "OK."

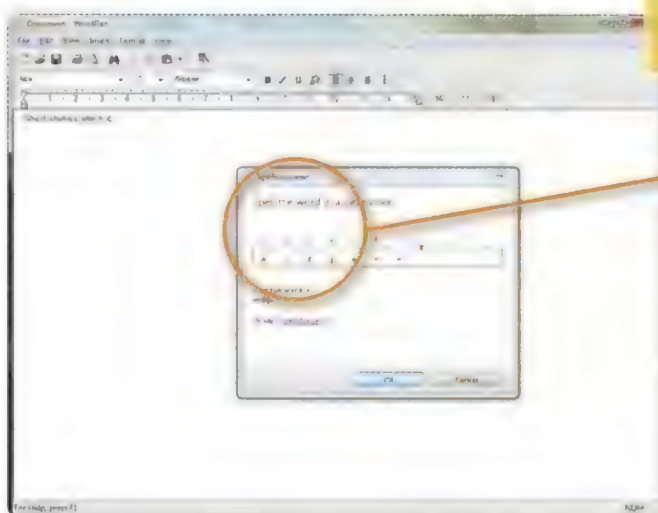
Repeat offenders

If you're trying to correct a word that the program never recognizes, say "**Spell it.**"



Spelling words out a character at a time

In the Spelling Panel that appears, spell the word slowly, one letter at a time. If you make a mistake, say the number of the wrong letter, and then say the correct letter. If a letter is routinely misunderstood, say it with an example, such as "**H** as in **hotel**." When the spelling is correct, say "**OK**."



GET STARTED

Back up and restore your e-mail

Whenever you buy a new PC, you'll want to transfer your e-mails from the old machine to its successor. Thankfully, it's a surprisingly easy task. Read on to learn more. **By Craig Murphy**



Windows Vista comes with the Windows Easy Transfer tool, which we talked about on page 68 of this issue. It's a

super tool that shields us from much of the complexity involved in transferring old files from one PC to another. But you may want a little more control when backing up and restoring things such as your e-mail settings, contacts, and messages to a new computer.

If you have many years' worth of e-mail and contacts sitting in Outlook Express from older versions of Windows, don't worry – you're not alone. Many people buy a new machine in order to run Windows Vista, and you're unlikely to want to leave your previous life behind. Fortunately, it is relatively easy to

transfer this data.

So, if you now have two computers – one running Windows Vista and the other running an earlier version of Windows – what do you need to do in order to migrate from Outlook Express? First, you'll need to ensure that you have some kind of shared storage available. If you can write or burn a CD (or preferably DVD) using the old computer, that's great. Otherwise, if you can use a USB drive, that's just as good for the job in hand.

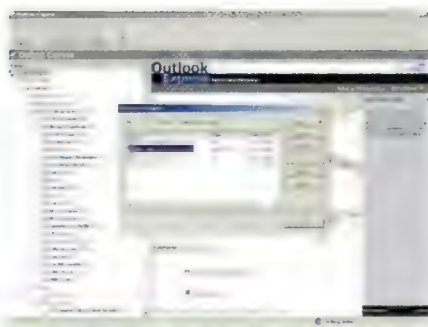
Depending on the amount of

e-mail that you've accrued over the years, you might need a lot of space. For example, I had three years' of e-mails to transfer, and it needed 267MB. If you get a lot of big file attachments, you could be looking at several gigabytes. Do what you can to prune your e-mail before migrating it, if possible. Once you've got your contacts, account settings, and e-mail safely saved on the CD or USB key drive, not only do you have a backup, but you've also got something that can be used in Windows Vista.

MIXED MESSAGES Bring your old e-mail with you to Windows Vista



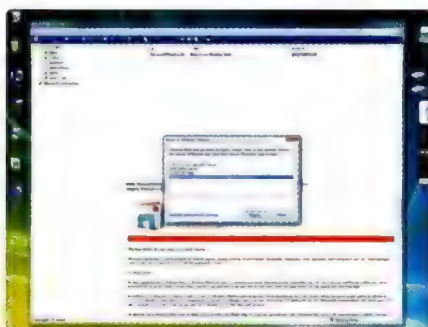
1 SAVE YOUR CONTACTS Saving your existing contacts in Outlook Express is an easy process. Open the Address Book using **Tools → Address Book**. Next, save it using **Address Book File → Export Windows Address Book (WAB)**. Save to your storage device.



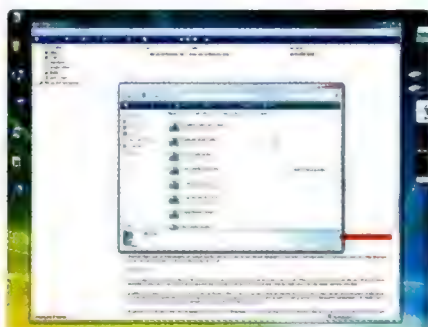
2 SAVE YOUR SETTINGS Go to **Tools → Accounts** and select the Mail tab. Click on the account you plan to use with Windows Mail, then click the **Export** button. Save the .iaf file to your CD or USB drive. If you've more than one account, repeat this step for each one.



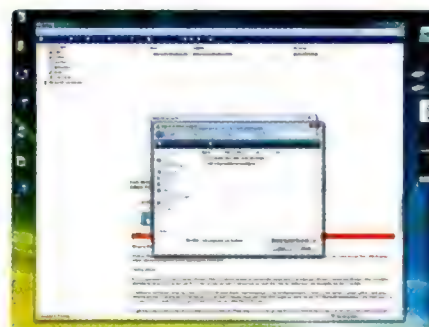
3 SAVE YOUR MESSAGES Choose **Tools → Options**, then **Maintenance**. **Store Folder** leads to Store Location. Right-click, **Select All**, right-click and **Copy**. Using Explorer, go to Store Location. Click **Start → Run**, right-click **Run** and select **Paste**. Click **OK**, and copy everything.



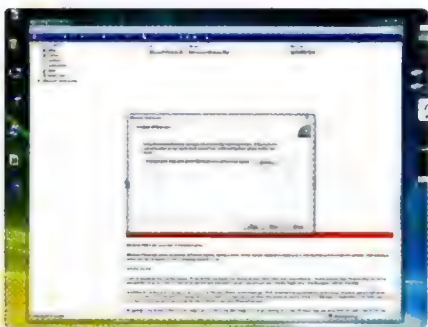
4 IMPORT CONTACTS On your new PC in Windows Mail, choose **File → Import**, then choose **Windows Address Book File**. Click **Import**, then navigate to the CD or USB key drive that contains the WAB you created in step 1. Clicking on **Open** imports your contacts.



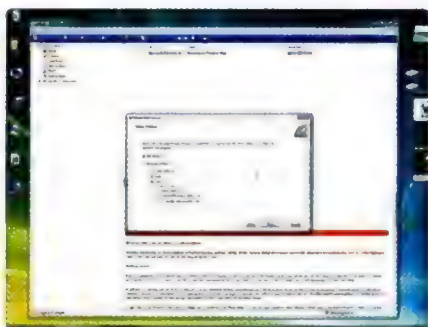
5 CHECK YOUR CONTACTS If the previous step went smoothly, then choosing the **Tools → Windows Contacts** option should reassure you that your contacts are now all set up in Windows Mail on the computer that is running Windows Vista.



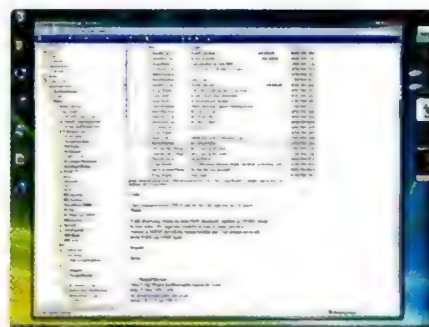
6 ACCOUNT SETTINGS Choose **Tools → Account**, then click on the **Import** button. By default, Windows Mail looks for Internet Account Files (.iaf), just like those you created in step 2. Choose each .iaf in turn, clicking on **Open** to import the account settings.



7 SPECIFY THE MAILSTORE Choose **File → Import**, then **Microsoft Outlook Express 6**. Click **Next**, leaving **Import from an OE6 Store Directory** selected. Go to the CD or USB drive that contains the Store Folder, and then to the Outlook Express folder before you click **Next**.



8 CHOOSE E-MAIL FOLDERS By default, Windows Mail chooses to import all of your existing email folders. If now is a good time to prune what has been imported, feel free to select individual folders. Clicking the **Next** button then performs the import.



9 FINAL CHECK There is further reassurance that all has gone well – imported mail now appears in the **Imported Folder**, and from here you're free to drag and drop it elsewhere within the program to suit the way you want to use Windows Mail.

GET STARTED

Get Organized with Windows Calendar



Your everyday life is filled with all kinds of activities and Windows Calendar can help you keep organized. We show you how in this extract from the book *Breakthrough Windows Vista* from Microsoft Press



If you've ever wished for a single calendar that can help you plan and manage your own activities as well as coordinate the rest of your family's activities, look no further. Windows Calendar is built right into Windows Vista and offers several features you will probably find useful. The Windows Calendar automated integration features make it extremely easy for groups of

people to use and share. You can create appointments, tasks, reminders, and priorities. You can also review and compare multiple calendars, import information from calendar websites that use the iCalendar format, publish your own calendar to the Web; and send e-mail appointments and invitations to friends and family directly from your calendar.

That's an awful lot of organization

in one place! Since we don't have all day to get you organized, we'll be taking a look at Windows Calendar's highlights. First you need to open Windows Calendar. You can do that by clicking the **Start** menu and typing **Windows Calendar** in the Start Search box that appears. Click it to open it when the result appears under Programs.

Create a task

1 To create your task, click **New Task** on the toolbar.

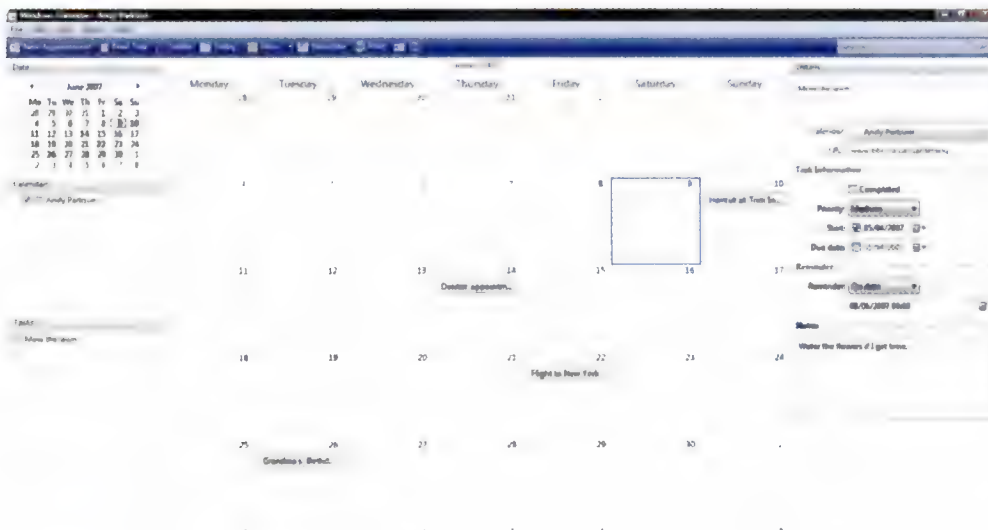
2 In the New Task box in the Details pane, type a description for the task.

3 Click the calendar where you want the task to appear and add any related URLs.

4 Under Task Information, type the completion status, priority, and start and due dates.

5 Under Reminder, use the drop-down menu to select reminders.

6 Type any notes you want to add, and click the calendar to close the Details pane.



Create an appointment

Enter details
Type the title or details of the appointment in the New Appointment box. Type any location information in the Location box.

Right calendar
Confirm you are in the correct calendar. Use the drop-down arrow in the Calendar box to select a new calendar for the appointment if necessary.

Date and time
Under Appointment Information, type the date, time, recurring information, and whether this is an all-day appointment. Select any reminder timing by using the drop-down arrow in the Reminder section.

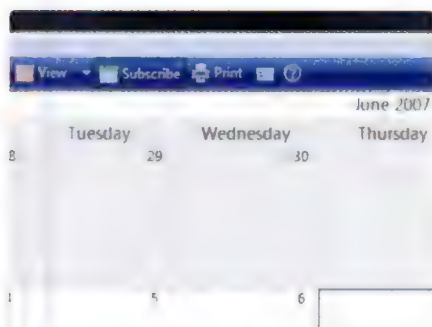
Extra info
Add participants and notes.

New appointment
Click New Appointment on the toolbar. The appointment will appear on your calendar in the color you've chosen. Type the details of the appointment in the Details pane on the right.

NOTE: When you have several calendars for your family, you can easily see appointments and tasks side by side, by selecting the calendars you want to see in the task pane on the left. Simply click the calendars

you want to see, and watch as the appointments and tasks appear on your calendar in the different colors family members have chosen. To see only certain calendars, deselect the other calendars.

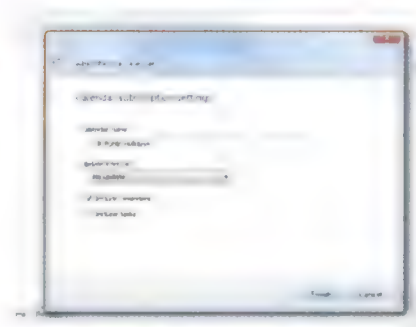
Subscribe to a calendar on the Web



1 SUBSCRIBE Open Windows Calendar, and click **Subscribe** on the toolbar.



2 ENTER URL Type the URL of the calendar you found and click **Next**.



3 CHOOSE SETTINGS Select a name for the calendar, an update interval, and whether you want reminders and tasks included. Click **Finish**.

DO MORE



Windows Vista is about much more than everyday computing tasks – it can also help you become more organized at work, and to get more out of life when you're away from work. Our Do More section is where we show you how.

IN THIS SECTION

- Create a photo DVD78
- Get a day's life out of your laptop battery80
- Hollywood tricks for making home movies82

Create a photo album on DVD

Want to show off and share your pictures on the big screen by creating a disc that you can watch on the TV. Windows DVD Maker makes it simple to do. **By David Weeks**



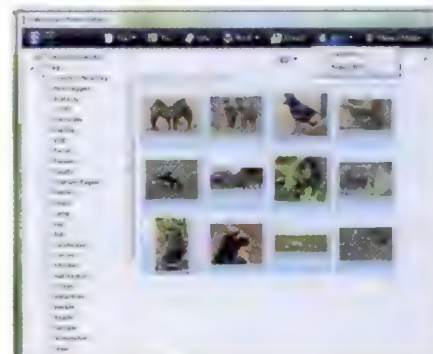
As much as I love taking photos, sharing them has always been a bit of a chore – either spending ages printing them all out, or crowding everybody around a computer screen. A better option has been to get them on a DVD that people can view on their TV, which you can now do quickly and easily.

Open up Windows DVD Maker from the Start menu and click **Add Items** to start building your collection. To create a quick collection, follow the steps shown at right – DVD Maker will make a collection of photo slideshows that can be played in any DVD player.

If you want to craft something more personal, that's easy, too. Once you have chosen the photos to include – you can fit about 3,000 on a standard DVD – and you've clicked **Next** to go on to the second screen, you can customize how the DVD menu works.

One of the biggest improvements you can make over a standard

slideshow is to add some music to play in the background. Click the **"Slide show"** button at the top of the window and choose **Add Music** to pick a tune from your hard drive. Select a tune and click **Move Up** or **Move Down** to change the running order. To build the show around the music, rather than the photos, check **"Change slide show length to match music length."**



1 PICK YOUR PHOTOS If you want to burn all of your photos that have a single tag ('holiday 2007', for example) click that tag in the left-hand menu in Photo Gallery. You can then click and drag to select those photos, and click **Burn → Video DVD**.

Windows DVD Maker

Add notes to pictures

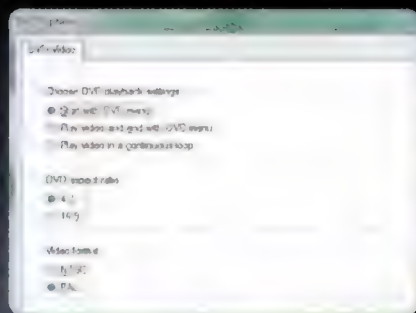
If you want to add an introduction to your photos, click **Menu Text** and type it into the **Notes** box. This will add a new option called **Notes** to the main DVD screen, which the viewer can select to read your commentary.

Give it some style

There are lots of different menu styles included with DVD Maker. Many of them are animated, so make sure you click **Preview** once you have selected one to see what it looks like.

Pick playback settings

Click **Options** on the first DVD Maker screen to choose how your DVD will appear on screen. If you're planning on showing it on a widescreen TV, set the aspect ratio to 16:9.

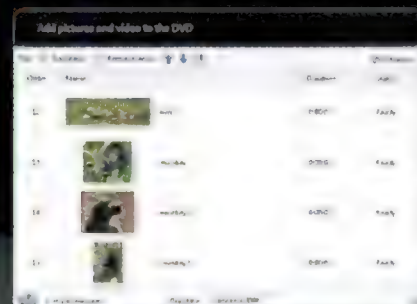


Choose a background

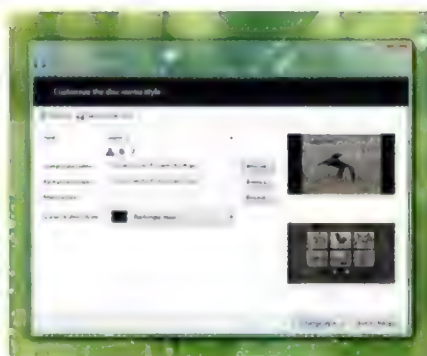
DVD Maker automatically picks one of your images to put in the background. If you want to change it, click **Customise Menu Style**. You can set the main menu background under **Foreground Video** and the background to the scene-selection menu under **Background Video**. You can choose either a photo or a looping video.

Make an auto-play DVD

If you don't want an interface, click the **Options** link on the first DVD Maker screen and choose **Play video in a continuous loop**. This will make the slideshow start automatically.



2 ADDING MORE If you want a wider range, click the first photo and then choose **Burn** followed by **Add Items** to pick some more. Click **Views** → **Extra Large Icons** to get a better view of what you're adding; add a title and click **Next** when you're finished.



3 MENU SCREEN Here's where you can choose what the main DVD screen looks like. The quickest option is to just pick a style from the menu on the right – click **Preview** to see how it will appear on screen. Click **Menu Text** to change any of the text you can see.



4 PHOTO FINISH By default, your photos will be arranged into a slide show. The photos will fade into view one after the other. If that's all you want to see, then click **Burn** to finish it. Make sure you've got a blank DVD in your DVD writer first!

DO MORE

Make your laptop battery last a day

Laptop battery life is measured in hours, although it often seems like minutes. Can the Windows Vista power management options prolong the power for an entire working day? **By Paul Douglas**



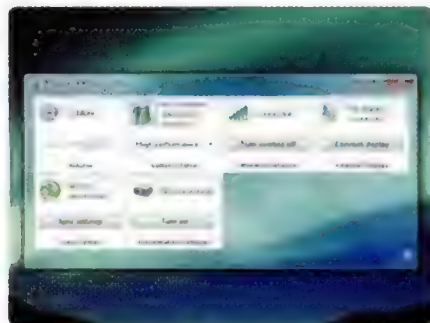
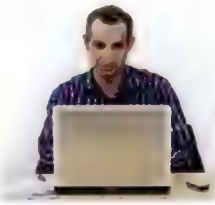
Usually when I'm on the move, my laptop battery lasts me around two hours before I'm either

crawling around the airport looking for power sockets or surreptitiously swiping laptops from colleagues or unfortunate passers by – but today I'm going it alone. Wish me luck!

9:00am 

First things first: All my USB stuff has to go, because it all draws power. Then I go into Windows

Mobility Center to disable Wi-Fi, switch the power saving mode from High Performance to Power Saver and tweak the power plan settings for maximum longevity. I also throttle the PC's maximum power



POWER OPTIONS Right-click on the battery icon in the System Tray and select Windows Mobility Center.



WI-FI MUST DIE Wireless is a huge drain on battery life. Use Windows Mobility Center to switch it off

down to 50%. The laptop's still plugged in, but the second I unplug it the battery indicator drops from 100% to 94%. Eek!

"If I drink coffee all day, and the PC sleeps, my battery will last forever"

9:30am 

I need to check e-mail, so I switch the wireless back on. I end up with tons of junk mail and nothing

useful. I've never resented spam as much as I do now. I switch the Wi-Fi off again and check the battery. It reads 86% – 2 hours and 34 minutes remaining.



10am 

I'm typing this document and editing a few others in Wordpad instead of the more demanding Microsoft Word, and I've closed unnecessary programs such as Messenger, antivirus and so on. Time for a meeting, so I put the laptop to sleep.

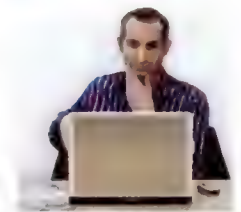
11am 

The laptop's now gone into hibernate mode. Upon resuming I notice that Aero's window transparency has gone – that's part of my take-no-prisoners power setting. It's not looking good – the

battery status monitor reckons I've got two hours left. Five minutes later it says 78 hours and 14 minutes. I'd love to believe the new estimate, but I don't.

12 noon 

Plain old typing isn't very processor intensive, but it has still dropped the battery



indicator from 75% to 58% in an hour. I dim the screen until I can barely see it.

1pm 

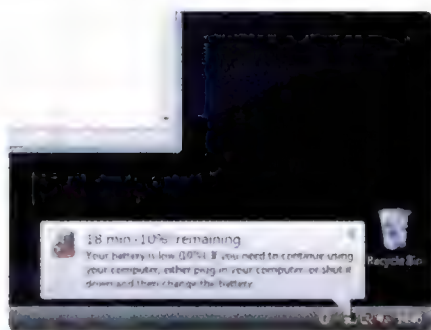
I realize that if I spend all day drinking coffee while my laptop sleeps, my battery could last forever. I suggest this plan to my boss, and he suggests that I might consider applying for a job elsewhere. Time to make a sharp exit and get some lunch.

2pm 

I've lost another 5% in sleep mode, but the time-remaining icon says I've got 29 hours to go. I turn the Wi-Fi back on to check e-mail.

2:16pm 

Battery capacity drops below 25% and a warning balloon pops up, but I can't turn off Wi-Fi until my e-mails arrive. I notice that my laptop isn't shoving superheated air out of its vents like it usually does, which is probably due to setting maximum processor performance in the power plan's advanced settings. The laptop's running so coolly that I figure I could sit naked with it on my lap and escape without even a minor burn. But if I tried it and



TOP-UP TIME When this balloon pops up it's time to shut down, swap batteries or find a power point.

someone walked in, would they understand that I was carrying out an important scientific experiment? I decide to keep my khakis on.

2:24pm 

I know my net connection's OK, but e-mail isn't working, so I switch off the Wi-Fi again. When I said it was a battery hog, I wasn't kidding: I've lost 1% of battery power for every minute it was on.



2:41pm 

A balloon has popped up over the battery icon telling me that I've got less than 10% left to go. I'm typing like a total demon now.

2:48 

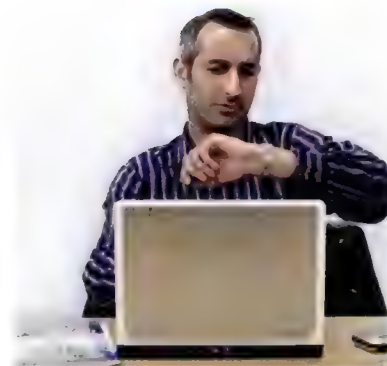
The warnings say I must stop writing NOW or my laptop will go to sleep. So I'm typing as fast as I possibly

2:51pm 

I probably should have heeded that warning. As soon as battery power dropped down to the critical 5% level, the system hibernated to protect my data – cutting me off in mid-sentence. But I'm not beaten yet. I've booted back in and resumed the system, which is not too smart when there's so little power left, but I have to see what it will do. I then immediately put the laptop to sleep and go grab some more coffee. Maybe it will magically regain a little power while it's asleep.

3:02pm 

The battery indicator says 'Monday', which confuses me until I realize I'm hovering over the wrong icon. One minute remaining.



3:04pm 

No ifs, no buts, no warnings, no power: My PC is now officially dead. But I'm still writing, and I'm still doing it on my laptop. How? By writing on the lid with a Sharpie pen. That still counts, doesn't it?

The verdict

I didn't make it to 5pm, but I'm amazed that I lasted so long: My laptop's officially rated for 2.5 hours and, just as you'll never get the miles per gallon car makers claim, you never get the battery life PC makers promise. I think I've proven how useful Windows Vista's power management features can be, though I don't recommend dimming the screen too much unless you really enjoy a good headache.



Turn your memories into great home movies

A camcorder can help you take your friends and family on a quick tour of this world, or bore them into the next one. Find out how to make the movies they'll actually want to see **By Richard Cobbett**



Bad home movies can seem longer than many felony prison sentences. They're prone to multimedia's worst

excesses and, all too often, guaranteed to leave you trying to slit your wrists with a Pringle. But with Windows Vista, you have no excuse for such horrors. None. We're declaring war on bad home movies right now!

The good news is that with Windows Movie Maker you immediately avoid the biggest trap. It's a simple editor that focuses on the important things. Not only don't you need hundreds of transitions, effects, and other flashy tools, you're usually better off without them. It's not for nothing that the average director's favorite transition is the humble cut.

Editing in action

Let's step through a holiday video. Don't worry about the mouse clicks

ZOOM WITH CARE

Overuse of this function on a handheld camera nearly always looks awful. Get close to your subject instead. If you do need to zoom in, do it before the shot starts or your subject will be out of focus.

yet; that's the easy part. Raw footage is where every project starts. The cardinal rule is simple: Shoot everything you can, then throw out almost as much. A ruthless editor is a good editor.

Exactly what to keep will depend on your subject matter and intended audience, but you'll never go wrong by treating it as a professional project, rather than doing things you know are wrong. One thing I always do when starting a new project is to sit down and list everything that annoys me in similar movies I've seen, and then avoid doing them even if they seem like a great idea at the time. Here, let's look at the classic roller-coaster shot. On my list, the number one

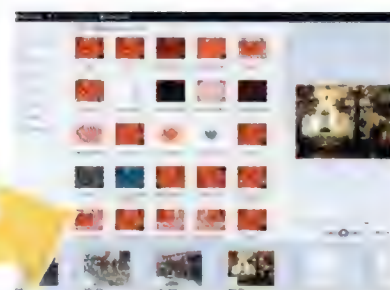
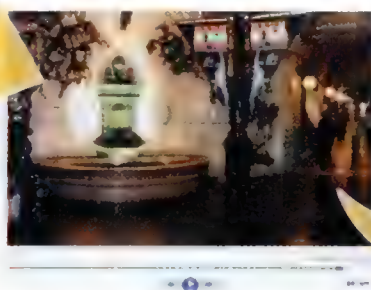
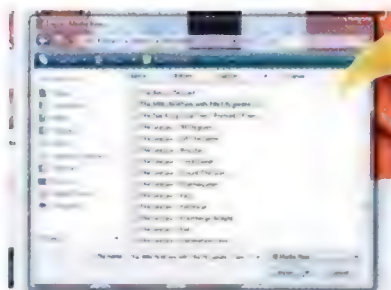
'gotcha' is the first-person shakycam as someone, usually my father, desperately tries to keep the camcorder's viewfinder up to his face as he films.

It never works. Even without the blurring of the world and the stomach-churning bounce of the camera at every twist and turn, you'll never be able to emulate the experience of being on that ride. So what do you do? You film it anyway. The problem isn't the footage; it's the execution. You also film the exterior of the ride, and everything else you're going to cut. Then get the shears.



How to edit basic camcorder footage

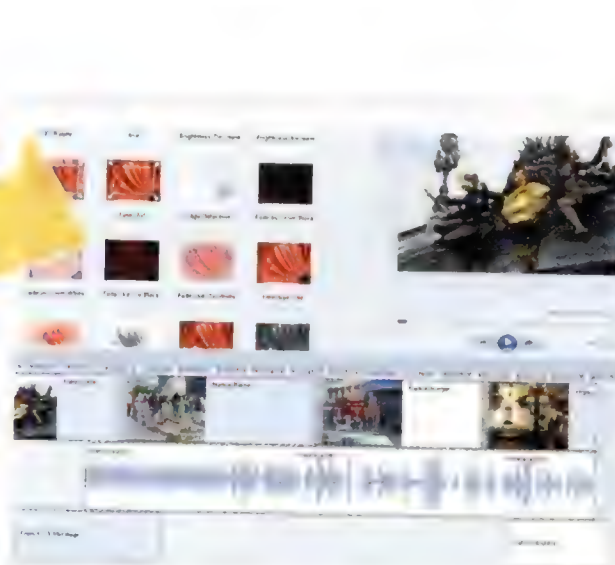
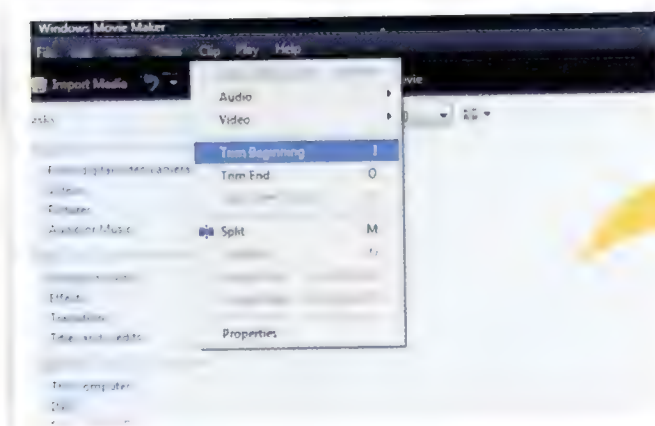
Following these simple steps will help you to make the most of your clips in Windows Movie Maker



1 IMPORTING CLIPS You'll need your footage in digital format – either direct from your camera, or as a file on your hard drive. Movie Maker supports most formats, including WMV and MPEG, although not QuickTime, which you'll need third-party tools to convert.

2 SPLITTING THEM Longer clips need to be cut into pieces so that you can use them across your project. Click the video in the main **Edit** pane and play it in the viewer on the right until you get to the break point. Click **Split** to carve it into two pieces, ready to place.

3 STORYBOARDING This is probably the simplest way to make your movie. Just drag and drop clips from the library into the right places at the bottom of the screen. This is to get them into the correct order, ready to be trimmed down to size and have effects applied.



4 TRIMMING Select a clip on the Storyboard and it will jump to that point in the **Preview** window. Drag the scroller to the point that you want it to start on, and select **Trim Beginning** from the **Clip** menu. Repeat with **Trim End** on the other side. If you make a mistake, click **Clear Trim Points** and start over.

Using footage from elsewhere

Many videos use stock footage to help add detail and tone to a movie, and so can you. While most of the main libraries are expensive, the Internet Archive hosts a huge range of videos at www.archive.org/details/movies, many of which are public domain or else available under a Creative Commons license.

5 ADVANCED EDITING The Storyboard is a simple, quick, and dirty way to lay out your movie, but you can get more control by switching to **Timeline** view. Click where it says **Storyboard** to bring up the option. The Timeline view shows all audio, video, and overlays, with split-second timing options.

DO MORE

Simple movie-making guidelines

First of all, get the establishing shot. That should be easy enough – especially if the family is there, waving and looking nervously at the ride's biggest lunch-launching moment. Next, cut – a simple cut, nothing fancy – to the first-person camera, as the rollercoaster car pulls out of the station.

My list of movie-making annoyances tells me that we don't want to stick with this one shot for too long, so now we cut to another external shot of the coaster pulling away towards the big loop. Obviously, it's not your car. That doesn't matter. As it plummets, snap cut again to the first-person camera, showing a family member's screaming reaction. Cut back to the external.

If you do happen to have a good first-person shot of a drop, or a turn, or a particular piece of scenery, slip it in. Finally, cut to the family waddling uncertainly out of the gates, and close-up shots of reactions; cries of "Again!" or "Never again!"

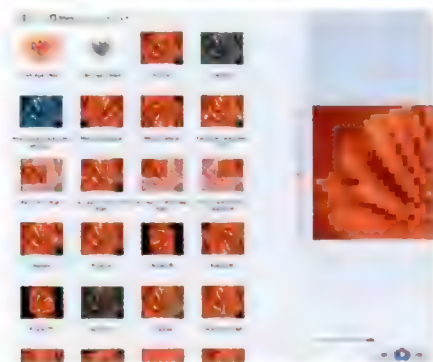
It's a simple editing job. One transition (Cut) and one editing tool (Trim). However, when you play the video, nobody will care about the technology behind it, just the result. And believe it or not, that's the big secret of editing. Simplicity always wins out over glitz, and less really is more.

Of course, there is room to play around with the more complicated effects as well. If you're building a montage of photos, picking a transition to go between them can look good. Even then, though, the keep-it-simple mantra applies. A page-curl may look good, followed by a bar-wipe, followed by a dissolve, followed by a shatter is guaranteed to look tacky.

Always try to stick to one effect, one editing style, one (rough) length for your individual segments, and the whole thing will flow. It may seem like overkill for a family video, but when you've got the tools to do it right, why settle for less?

The art of animation

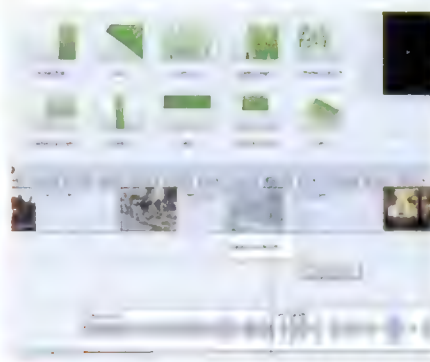
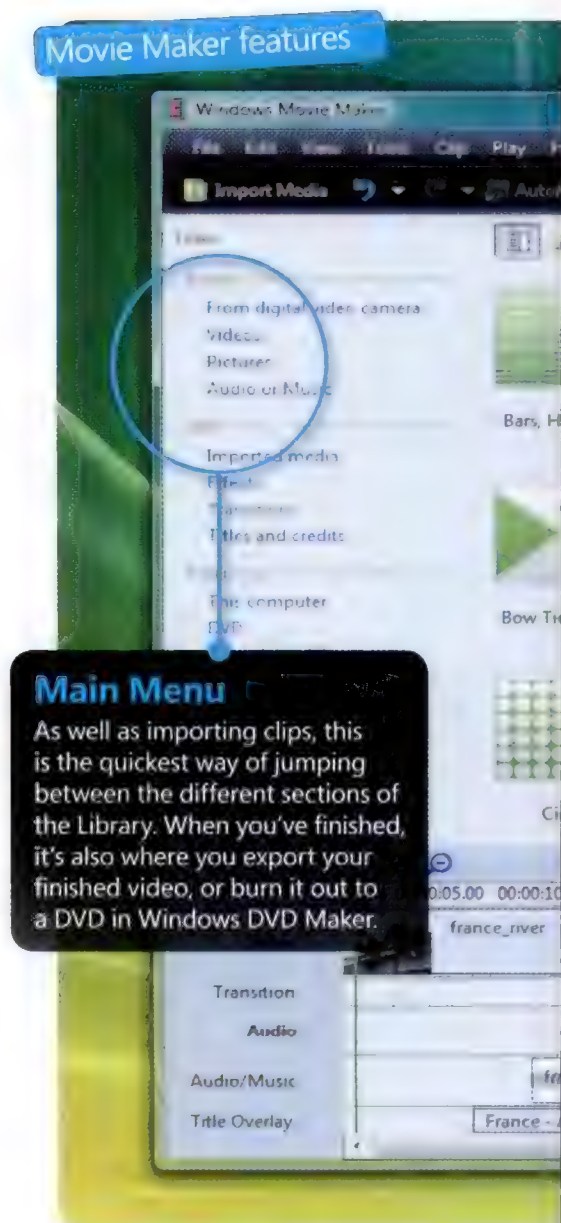
Add flash and substance to your movies with these effects



1 EFFECT / TRANSITION These are the two main animations available to you. Effects work on individual clips, making them sepia-toned or blurred, or whatever. Transitions link two clips – tearing, shattering, and pushing the screen.



2 STAY CONTROLLED Use as few transitions as possible. One or two can look good; more than that gets irritating. Think about how often the sappiest of romantic comedies wipe between scenes via a giant heart.



3 WATCH THE SPEED Click on Storyboard then Timeline to switch editing modes, and drag the block representing the transition. The maximum length is the length of the second clip.

Preview Window

This shows you the current state of your movie, complete with effects. It also previews effects and transitions on a set of stock images before you apply them.

The Library

As well as holding your video clips, audio clips, and image files (which can be animated into a montage, as at the start of this movie), here is where you'll find all the effects and transitions.

Controlling time

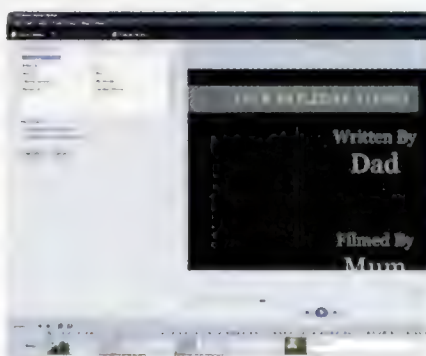
This is the more complex of the two editing modes, giving you precision control over your clips. The default is Storyboard, where you simply set them in place. The little arrows let you trim directly – although only movies. Images are scaled directly by dragging the edges on the Timeline.

Sliding through your movie

The Preview window works on your entire movie at once. You can use the Storyboard to skip directly to a point you want to edit, or navigate to it directly. Hit Play to get a better idea of how long everything is going to take in real time.



4 TITLES These are handled separately, with presets available for one-line titles, two-line titles, and a longer list of credits. You can choose the font and color, but not a great deal more.



5 TEXT CONTROL There are two types of titles – those before or after the movie, and text overlays. The former are like a movie clip, and can have effects added over the top. Overlays can be moved within a clip and scaled.



6 MIX AND MATCH Overlays aren't locked to a clip, so you can stretch them out to caption an extended sequence, and it all happens underneath them. The animation attached will only play at the start and end.

Choose the graphics card upgrade for you

Whether you want to play games, get into 3D animation, or simply get the best out of the interface in Windows Vista, a decent graphics card will give your PC a new lease of life. Here's how to choose the right card for your needs **By James De Vile**

A computer is made up of a number of components; if just one of these is underpowered, it will hold the others back. You could have a great graphics card, but if your processor can't keep up, it'll create a 'bottleneck', limiting the card's performance.

If you bought a PC a few years ago that wasn't specifically for gaming, it's likely the graphics system is built into the motherboard. It may be reasonably capable, but a dedicated card will walk all over it.

However, before you run out to buy a

graphics card, you'll need to check that your motherboard is compatible. A few years ago, the way a graphics card communicated with your PC was changed to a standard called PCIe. If your PC is more than a couple of years old, it may use the old standard, AGP. If that is the case, don't panic – many modern cards are still released for AGP, enabling you to enjoy many of the latest games.

Visual aid

If you only use your Windows Vista PC to watch the occasional movie, play family-

friendly games, and browse the Internet, there's little point in handing over \$500 for a high-end card. Nevertheless, any upgrade will offer improvements in many different elements of Windows Vista. If your PC isn't capable of running Windows Aero or behaves erratically when moving windows and using Flip3D, it will benefit from an upgrade. Similarly, if you're experiencing a frame rate of less than around 30 frames per second in games, upgrading to a card that's more suited for gaming will make the action less jerky.

It's worth pointing out that a new graphics card won't just be quicker at drawing a flat image on your screen – it'll be capable of rendering techniques that your old card couldn't even understand. This means that an upgrade won't just increase your frame rate – it'll add a much higher level of detail and create, for example, realistic smoke and fog effects.

One more thing to think about is the graphics system your card supports on a hardware level. Windows Vista introduces version 10 of Microsoft's DirectX graphics system. This allows noticeable differences in image quality compared to DirectX 9, though if your card is only DirectX 9 capable, the advantages over the graphics system in Windows XP will not be that great. If you want to see more improvements you'll need to invest serious money in a top-end card. Currently, Nvidia's 8800 series and ATI's Radeon HD 2900 series are the only cards to support DirectX 10 on a hardware level.



Great Sapphire Radeon X1650 Pro 256MB

An excellent mid-range card at a great price, the X1650 Pro offers a lot of the features of its big brother, the X1950. Don't expect to play the latest games at high resolution or with the details on maximum, but if you have a 19-inch monitor, or smaller, this will serve as a worthy upgrade.

Price \$100 www.sapphiretech.com



Greater Hightech X1950XT IceQ 3 Turbo 256MB

If you have a large widescreen monitor, you'll need a card that can handle the high resolution. ATI's X1950XT chipset is a step below the top-end HD 2900 series, but provides excellent gaming power for a lot less money. You can expect to play the current generation of 3D games with near-maximum settings.

Price \$350 www.hisdigital.com



Greatest Club GeForce 8800GTX 768MB

The first native DirectX 10 card, the 8800GTX supports the new Windows Vista graphics features, providing a near-perfect gaming experience. Be warned – this card requires a colossal 320W to operate, which may mean an expensive power supply upgrade, though if you can afford this card in the first place, that shouldn't be a problem.

Price \$550 www.club.nl

Five things to look out for

1 Card type
Check your PC's graphics interface before you buy. Older PCs will use an AGP slot, but if you want the very best, upgrade your motherboard to the newer PCIe system.

2 Power requirements
The better your card is, the more power it will need to operate. Check the maximum wattage of your PC's power supply – it should be written on your hard drive.

3 Chipset players
The two main players in the graphics card industry are ATI and Nvidia. Both offer many choices for different users, from those on a budget to high-end spenders.

4 PC processor
Although it's not part of a graphics card purchase, it's an important consideration – an underpowered CPU will severely limit the power of a new graphics card.

5 Manufacturer
Different manufacturers will release similar cards. Ultimately, the same chipset with the same amount of memory will perform almost identically, regardless of who made it.

Widescreen monitors for Windows Vista

The finest view of Windows Vista is through a widescreen window. Here's a look at some of today's best displays

By Neil Mohr

The entire world has gone widescreen crazy, and Windows Vista is no slouch when it comes to the stretched display. Windows Vista has been designed from the ground up with the wider screen in mind, so if you want the best view, it's the display format of choice.

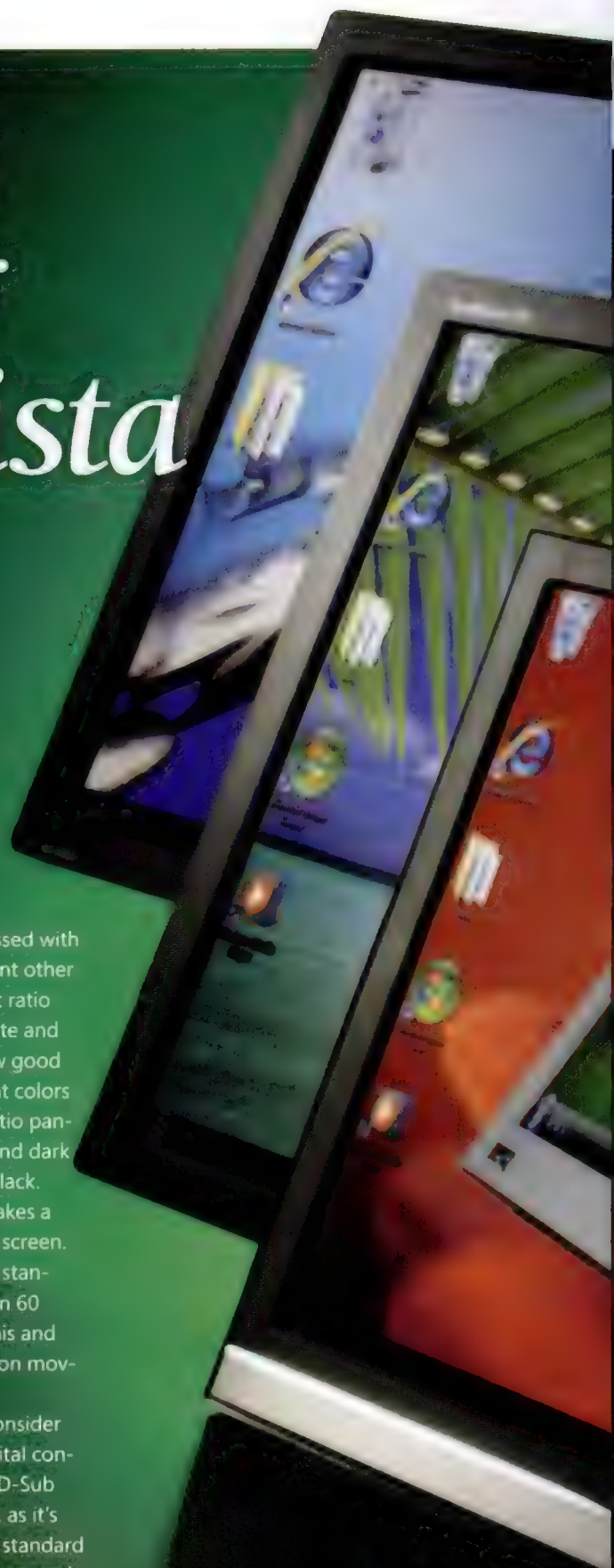
It may not have escaped your attention that the latest generation of widescreen LCD displays also happen to look great. The thin, bevelled edges, stylish designs, and desktop-maximizing slimline footprints make them the supermodels of the monitor world.

But looks aside, the widescreen aspect makes for more natural viewing. While this might have originally been devised for improved movie viewing on computers, it also provides more desktop space for windows and applications. A major attraction for the latest generation of displays is the high resolutions they're capable of achieving – 1,680x1,050 is fairly standard with larger panels offering up to 2,560x1,200, providing acres of viewing area.

It's easy to become over-obsessed with size – there are, after all, important other features to consider. The contrast ratio – the difference between full white and black – generally determines how good a display is at reproducing vibrant colors and true black. Lower contrast ratio panels will have washed-out colors and dark areas that look more grey than black.

Response time is how long it takes a panel to redraw a single pixel on screen. Times of 16ms or better are now standard, good enough for more than 60 updates a second. Slower than this and blurring or ghosting can appear on moving objects.

Finally, it's also important to consider connections. DVI is the latest digital connection, replacing the analogue D-Sub input. HDCP is connected to DVI, as it's part of the high-definition video standard that Blu-ray and HD DVD require to work.







Product HP 3065

Price \$2,650

Web www.hp.com

There's impressive and then there's the HP 3065 30-inch LCD display. As far as LCD technology currently goes, this is as good as it gets. The key feature here is the vast 2,560x1,600 pixel resolution. In the current market, only

acres of desktop space, making it easy to keep a web browser, e-mail, and various windows open, and still have access to the desktop.

A side effect of having such a high resolution is that the display requires a graphics card that has a dual-link DVI port. It's an important factor that you'll need to check – otherwise the monitor will be relegated to 1,280x800 resolution.

"It provides acres of desktop space, making it easy to keep a web browser and various windows open, and still have access to the desktop"

Dell, Apple, and HP have panels available with this ultra-high level of resolution.

This is up to four times more than that offered by many of the budget panels. While the cost is also four times as much, the sheer quality of the display really makes it worth the money. It provides

As a rule of thumb, all of ATI's x1000 line and Nvidia's GeForce 7 and 8 series do support it, as do the older 6800 models, but you should still check your individual card for compatibility.

In daily use, the panel's image quality is exceptional. The level of detail the display

picks up is unprecedented, enabling you to see every tiny detail in high-definition movies, while the color reproduction surpasses anything we've seen before. HP claims it has an extra deep color gamut and, in practice, it really does seem to be more adept at picking out subtle color gradients than any of the other displays we tested.

The display has three DVI connections, plus a four-port USB hub. The only display control provided is for brightness, meaning that any other adjustments you want to make will need to be done via the display driver in Control Panel. The height-adjustable stand works smoothly and keeps the vast panel in its place perfectly.

Our verdict

Buy it if... You want the best computer LCD display currently on the market.

Don't buy it if... You have a small desk or a small budget.



The bottom line

A superb display with a high-resolution image and a matching price tag.



**Mid-range
productivity**
BenQ FP241WZ
\$820

Product FP241WZ

Price \$820

Web www.benq.com

Despite the existence of various other display sizes between 20 and 24-inches, 21-, 22-, and 23-inch displays offer no true advantages over their 20-inch cousins in terms of resolution or performance. It's not until you

There are both DVI-D and HDMI digital inputs alongside the traditional analog D-Sub connection. Beside these, there are video-friendly S-Video and composite inputs, plus component for HD video. These could easily pipe in video from a set-top box or DVD player – perfect for viewing full screen or using the flexible picture-in-picture feature.

Physically, it's an impressive package.

"Hot off the production line, its freshness in design shines through and it boasts an array of features and connections that make it a mighty alluring display choice"

hit the 24th dimension that you make the jump to 1,920x1,200 resolution.

This particular model from BenQ is hot off the production line. Its freshness in design shines through and it boasts an array of features and connections that make it a mighty alluring display choice.

The stand is solid and offers vertical adjustment, pan, and tilt, and enables the screen to be rotated for use in portrait or landscape mode. The menu system is comprehensive but slow in use and has awkward position controls. Colour controls are comprehensive, meaning

once you've wrestled with the menu, fine-tuning is easy.

The BenQ shows dexterity in brightness and color, partially thanks to its high 500 cd/m2 output, which borders on being too bright for desktop use. It manages to output vibrant colors and true greys creating excellent skin tones. Dark colors occasionally seemed muddy but the detail was excellent.

Both the digital inputs gave a pure, sharp image. Initially, the D-Sub analogue input seemed slightly out of focus but a forced resync had it almost as sharp as we would like. Feature-wise, the BenQ excels, and is easily the best of the lot. In term of image quality, it's up there with the Samsung and HP, while at this price it remains an affordable option.

Our verdict

Buy it if... A premium, cutting-edge display is on the shopping list but at a reasonable price.

Don't buy it if... HDMI input for HD movies isn't of any importance.



The bottom line

A feature-rich and talented performer. This offers everything you'd expect.

GEAR GUIDE



**Big-screen
multimedia**
Samsung
Syncmaster 275t
\$1,230

Product Syncmaster 275t

Price \$1,230

Web www.samsung.com

Samsung is a big name in the display world for more than one reason. Sure enough, it produces some big displays, but it's also one of the few companies that actually manufactures the original LCD panels. These are used not only by Samsung itself, but by other com-

panies. But who are we to complain? At 0.303mm the dot-pitch is still reasonable, and those pixels are confined inside a well-designed, thin, bevelled-edge display, which makes Samsung's last generation of monitors look gaudy. The rotating stand is well designed, the vertical lift-and-tilt design works smoothly, and on-screen controls are comprehensive, if a little awkward to navigate.

Connections are a pretty complete

with the HP and, despite our previous grumbles about the dot-pitch, the detail is immaculate. The comprehensive controls enable you to easily fine tune the image to your own personal tastes. Color reproduction is as fine as you're going to find anywhere else, with deep darks and rich skin tones.

The only problem is, with this being a new panel, there's a price premium. We'd be tempted to pay extra for this 30-inch display. Or, alternatively, save a bundle and opt for one of the many same resolution 24-inch displays.

"When it comes to picture quality, the panel is sensational. Despite our grumbles about the dot-pitch, the detail is immaculate"

panies, too. This, in part, explains why only it and Dell currently have 27-inch monitors in their product line-ups.

With a 1,920x1,200 resolution, this 27-inch Samsung doesn't actually offer any more pixels than many 24-inch models. So, technically, it also has a poorer dot-pitch in exchange for those three extra

inches. But who are we to complain? At 0.303mm the dot-pitch is still reasonable, and those pixels are confined inside a well-designed, thin, bevelled-edge display, which makes Samsung's last generation of monitors look gaudy. The rotating stand is well designed, the vertical lift-and-tilt design works smoothly, and on-screen controls are comprehensive, if a little awkward to navigate.

Connections are a pretty complete affair. There's the standard analog VGA D-Sub, plus a digital DVI-D with HDCP for protected HD films. There are also S-Video, composite, and component inputs. These can drive the display or be used with its picture-in-picture modes.

Our verdict

Buy it if... You haven't seen the 30-inch HP or are short of a few hundred bucks.

Don't buy it if... You can afford the 30-inch HP.



The bottom line

We're not sure those extra three inches are worth all the extra money.



For entry-level gaming
ASUS MW201u
\$300

Product MW201u

Price \$300

Web www.asus.com

There is currently something of an explosion happening in the 19- and 20-inch LCD market. A combination of falling panel prices and a widescreen size that offers genuine advantages over older 17- and 19-inch CRT monitors, means every man and his dog wants to buy or sell one.

with the required HDCP for HD movie playback.

Impressively, this display sports a 2ms grey-to-grey response time, which is among the fastest available, making this panel a desirable option for gamers. It also has a superior 170-degree horizontal viewing angle – many at this level offer only a 160-degree viewing angle.

The digital DVI input provides a pin-sharp display, which makes the most of those 1.7 million pixels. Scaling to

did a sterling job of color reproduction, picking out all the detail within HD movies and handling the flesh tones and dark areas with aplomb.

The menu system is well thought out and easy to use with the screen-mounted controls. At the base of the display are integrated stereo speakers. As usual, these are tinny and not particularly loud.

One weakness the panel displayed was with the D-Sub analogue input. The picture wasn't as pin sharp as we would normally expect and there was also a slight brightness inconsistency along the top and bottom of the panel, but nothing noticeable in normal use.

"This Asus goes to show that just because a model is in this budget category, it doesn't have to skimp on quality or features"

This Asus goes to show that just because a model is in this budget category, it doesn't have to skimp on quality or features. To start, it's a 20-inch with a 1,680x1,050 resolution. It has both an analog D-Sub input and a DVI port

other resolutions is performed well, too, without too much softness. The display comes with a number of preset 'Splendid' colour settings and, while we're not usually keen on these types of presets, they did work well with the Asus. The panel

Our verdict

Buy it if... You're after a low-cost, high-performance gaming display – the 2ms response makes it perfect.

Don't buy it if... You're looking for the biggest bargain – there's cheaper out there.



The bottom line

An entry-level widescreen display that offers good resolution and HDCP.

Head to head, and at a glance

Full specifications for the monitors we tested



MODEL	LP3065	FP241WZ	SYNCMASTER 275T	MW201U
MANUFACTURER	HP	BenQ	Samsung	ASUS
PRICE	\$2,650	\$820	\$1,230	\$300
WEB	www.hp.com	www.benq.com	www.samsung.com	www.asus.com
SIZE	30in	24in	27in	20in
RESOLUTION	2x560x1,600	1,920x1,200	1,920x1,200	1,680x1,050
CONTRAST	1,000:1	1,000:1	1,000:1	700:1
RESPONSE	12ms	16ms	16ms	2ms (g2g)
BRIGHTNESS	300	500	450	300
VIEW ANGLE (H/V)	178/178	178/178	178/178	170/150
PC INPUTS	DVI-D x3	D-Sub, DVI-D, HDMI	DVI-D, D-Sub	DVI-D, D-Sub
VIDEO IN	N/A	S-Video, Component, Composite	S-Video, Component, Composite	N/A
HDCP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
USB HUB	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
SCORE	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆

Dead pixels problem

Dead pixels are an annoying phenomena that used to be the bane of the LCD buyer. Imagine the billions of individual pixels that LCD manufacturers produce as part of all LCD panels and you'll understand that one or two may not work. It used to be the case these panels were still sold. As a consumer, this was very annoying: Your sexy, new, expensive panel has a permanent dark spot

on it. This was covered by the canny manufacturers. When you checked the fine print, it allowed for up to three dead pixels on a panel. Thankfully, most companies now offer zero dead pixels guarantees, ensuring that when a panel is turned on for the first time, it's unsullied by nasty blank pixels. It's very rare, in our experience, to find any at all these days.

Which one should you buy?

No matter what your budget, there's a display here that'll happily consume it. While \$2,650 could seem extravagant for a monitor, bear in mind it could easily outlive several PCs. Our main issue with the HP 30-incher is just how large it is – it'll completely dominate any desk it's put on. If you do own a large desk, then expect an amazing multimedia experience. That's if you have a system that can drive this huge panel.

The Samsung is equally impressive but does seem to sit in a no man's land when it comes to size. We would prefer to pay the extra for the HP or save a bundle on a 24-inch option. That's where the BenQ steps up – and it's certainly impressive.

Finally, the Asus 20-inch does show what great value these smaller panels are. A combination of high-resolution, color, and price make this a good option.

MAXIMUM PC **MOD** **SHOP**

Coming September 2007

5 tips for a perfect picnic



1 Check the weather

There's no greater disaster in the world of outdoor spreads than a downpour turning your perfect spot into the mudpit. Use the Windows Vista Sidebar weather gadget to check the forecast for your area, and make sure the sun shines on your picnic.

2 Get equipped

So you're chilling out, catching the rays, lying on the grass... when you suddenly start feeling uncomfortable and you find an ant nibbling at your sandwich. It's time to invest in some picnic paraphernalia: insulated cool bags, a rug, and one of those hampers with champagne glasses and forks will make your experience far more agreeable. There are several specialist stores on the Internet, such as www.picnicgear.com.

3 Find your way

If your picnic travels take you into unknown territory, it would be a good idea to know exactly where you're going. Go to maps.live.com for driving directions and a printable map of your route. Or try Microsoft Street & Trips 2007. With turn-by-turn directions, customized maps, trip times, and more, Street & Trips will ensure that you never get lost again. It's even available with a GPS device, turning your Windows Vista laptop into your very own satellite navigation system.

4 Make a meal of it

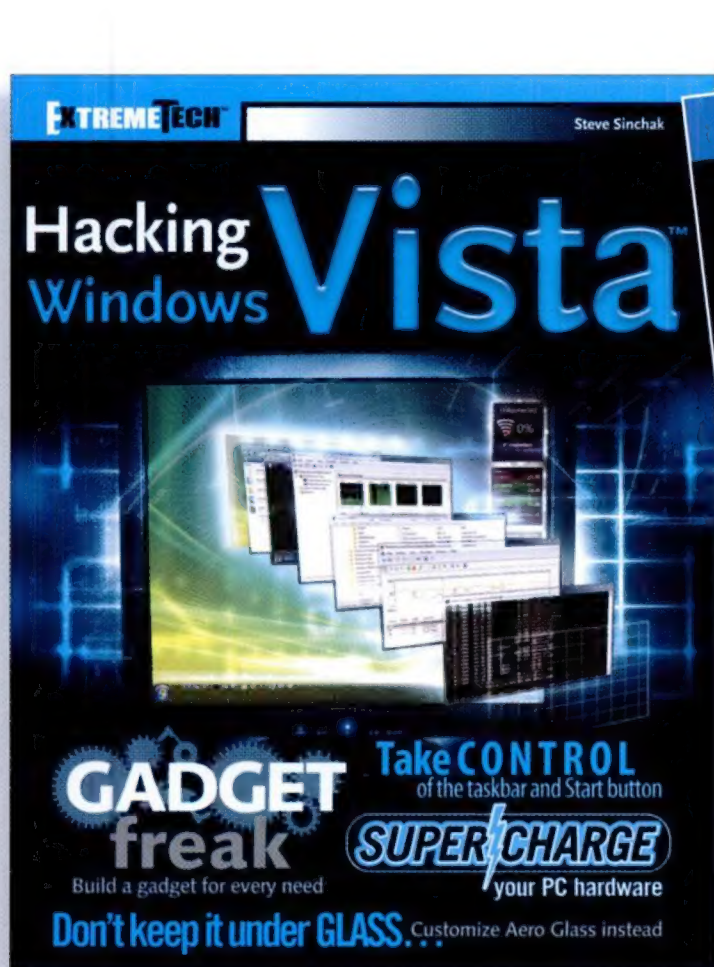
If you're taking a loved one or potential loved one on a romantic picnic this summer, a meatloaf sandwich with ketchup is unlikely to impress. There are plenty of websites on hand to give you ideas for creating delightful alfresco

dishes. If you're feeling adventurous, Food.com offers hundreds of gourmet recipes from Food Network's huge line-up of cooking shows. Meanwhile, Allrecipes.com is chock full of great culinary ideas submitted by home cooks like yourself and rated by the community.

5 Entertain yourself

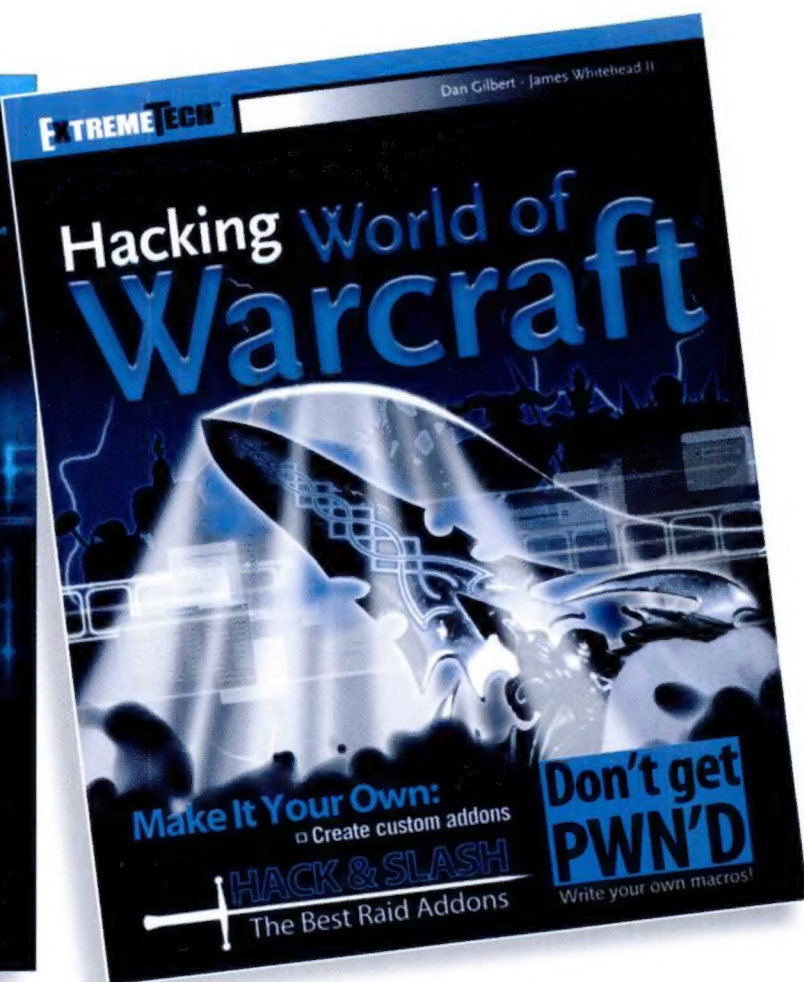
What could be better than sitting out in the sun, enjoying delicious food with some ambient music? Use your Windows Vista laptop to take your entire music library with you, so you don't leave that special tune behind. Those without laptops can transfer their music to an MP3 player, and invest in some inflatable speakers, such as the Ellula Hot Air Speakers available at Amazon.com. —James Stables

For work and for play. You decide which is which.



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978-0-470-11002-7

Command your world with addons, macros, and customizations from the masters who gave you the addons Atlas and PerfectRaid. Learn how to use combat statistics, how to add instance maps and make notes on the world map, how to create two fully functional addons from start to finish, and much more.

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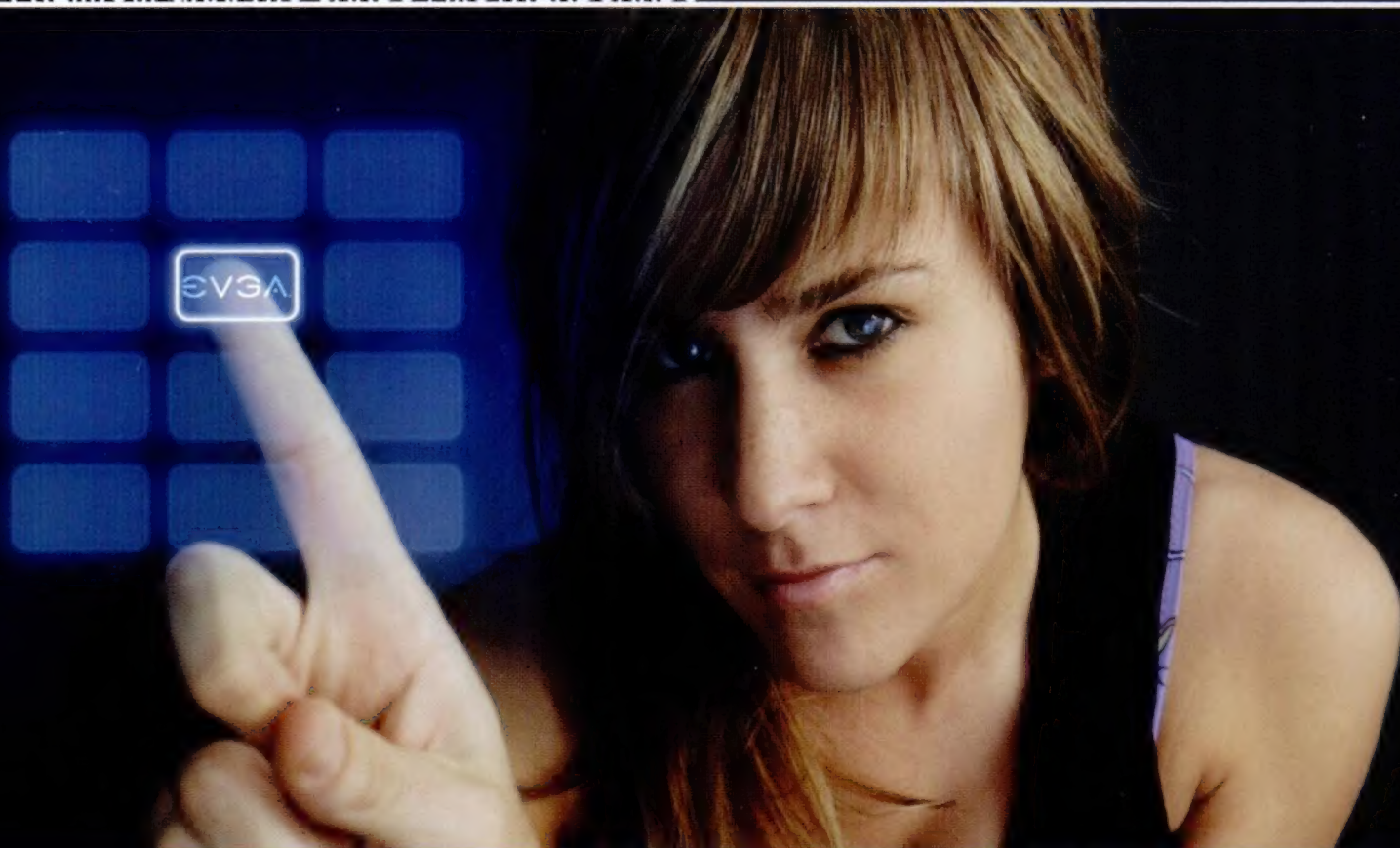
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